

# MILITARY

ILLUSTRATED

PAST & PRESENT

No.58

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**PENINSULAR ADVENTURES  
OF THE 87th FOOT**

**QUEBEC VOLTIGEURS 1812-15**

**THE 1992 CHICAGO SHOW**

**THE LONDON REGIMENT**

**ENGLISH CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELDS  
FROM THE AIR**

**BRITISH CAVALRY IN THE GULF**

**18th CENTURY MILITARY BANDS**

**THEODORE EICKE**



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□ PAST & PRESENT □

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Our front cover illustration shows a scene from the new Central Television film 'Sharpe's Eagle', based on the Bernard Cornwell novels about the adventures of a rifleman in the Napoleonic Wars, which will be screened in May. Full story next month.

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## EDITOR'S NOTES

### NORMANDY TOUR COMPETITION WINNERS

The first prizewinner of our Normandy Tour competition featured in the September, October and November issues last year is Mr C. Ailsby of Peterborough who, with a partner of his choice, will be touring the Normandy battlefields courtesy of Major and Mrs Holt's Battlefield Tours Ltd, the popular organisers who have now been running battlefield tours for 17 years.

The two runners-up, who will each receive an autographed copy of General Sir Peter de la Billière's book *Storm Command* courtesy of publishers HarperCollins, are Mr S.G. Williams of Cople, Beds, and Mr N. Taylor of Derby. Finally, the following five people will each receive a free year's subscription to 'MI': Mr E. Kennedy of Toronto, Canada; Mr G. Plunkett of Sheffield; Mr T. Furness of Nottingham; Mr E. Butler of London; and Mr M. McKinnon of Derby.

The answers to the questions are as follows. A1 General Bernhard Ramcke; A2 Erich Hartmann; A3 Malvern Hill; A4 USS Maine; A5 8 August 1918 (Battle of Amiens); A6 General Karl E. Herwarth von Bittenfeld; A7 Bayonne; A8 Charles de Gaulle; B1 Otto Skorzeny; B2 General George Kenney; B3 William Howard Russell; B4 Franco-Italian War, 1859 (not the American Civil War as many readers suggested); B5 Joachim Murat; B6 1793; B7 Guernica; B8 Colenso; C1 Colonel Peter de la Billière C2 Chassepot rifle; C3 GSG9 (Grenzschutzgruppe 9); C4 Rear Admiral Sir Arthur Wilson, VC; C5 Leonardo da Vinci, circa 1485 (wheel-lock 1517); C6 Northamptonshire; C7 Ney.

### WIN AN IMMORTAL BREX GUN

Manton International Arms, the world-famous Birmingham-based arms dealers, are offering a genuine Second World War .303 Bren Gun as the first prize in our new competition which starts in the April issue. This is NOT a replica but a real weapon in original condition safely deactivated so that no licence is required to own it. The winner will be the envy of all his friends so make sure of your copies of 'MI' by placing an order with your newsagent or taking out a subscription using the coupon on page 48. The competition will run over the April and May issues and we are allowing extra time for submission of entries to allow our overseas readers more chance of entering.

### ROYAL ARMOURIES MUSEUM

The Royal Armouries have recently announced plans for a new museum telling the story of the development of arms and armour around the world to be opened in Leeds in

1996. A long way ahead, but watch this space for news of developments. The museum will be the centrepiece of the Clarence Dock area redevelopment and is planned as a true museum for the 21st century, with a full gamut of audio-visual displays, a restaurant and shops. There will be regular displays of craft and weapons-handling techniques and a large display area outside will permit re-enactment society drill displays, jousting tournaments and falconry.

### RUSSIAN MILITARY TOUR

Red Bear Tours have announced an exciting new holiday tour for military enthusiasts spanning in 14 days visits to the major southern and central battlefields of the Second World War — Moscow, Volgograd (Stalingrad), Sevastopol and Odessa. This Australian company, which already organises an 1812 Campaign Tour, has organised the event with the Frunze Military Staff Academy, the Military Historical Institute of Moscow and Tsighais Military Publishing Group. Such a tour is only due to the demise of the USSR and would have been unthinkable only a couple of years ago, embracing as it does trips to the Kolbinka Tank Museum and Minimo Air Defence Museum. The tour even includes visits to Frunze and the Ministry of Defence in Moscow, as well as relaxing hours at the Bolshoi and on a Black Sea beach. The only snags are that it will cost US\$2,450 (we do not have a UK price yet) and that you have to find your own way to Moscow and back to join the



The Company of the White Bear, who re-enact skirmishes of the Wars of the Roses, won the trophy for best re-enactment group at Sandwell Skirmish '92 in November. This was West Bromwich's first wargames convention, organised by the Birmingham Wargames Society and Sandwell Council. Alongside the table-top battles were other events such as displays by the Sealed Knot and Roundhead Association. All declared it a great success and are looking forward to Sandwell Skirmish '93.

tour. Those interested should contact Athol Yates, Red Bear Tours, Box 210, 2 Old Brompton Road, London SW7 3DQ; or at 320B Glenferrie Road, Malvern, Melbourne, Victoria 3144, Australia; tel 613 824 7183. The first tour commences on 1 September 1993.

### BROOKLANDS SOCIETY

A new Brooklands Military Society based in the Weybridge area of Surrey has been formed to cater for military collectors, historians and vehicle preservation enthusiasts. Meetings to exchange ideas, items and news are held every month and

members of other societies are welcome. Anyone interested in finding out more should contact The Chairman, Brooklands Military Society, 70 Alexandra Road, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 2PF.

### POLES IN SCOTLAND

National Museums of Scotland are launching in April a new exhibition devoted to Polish forces in Scotland during the Second World War. The exhibition will include many items privately lent as well as two unique video displays from 1945. The exhibition will be held at the Scottish United Services Museum.

Bruce Quarrie

## THE AUCTION SCENE

ONE OF THE few sales of arms and armour to take place in December was held by Kent Sales. This salesroom holds a rather special place in the arms and armour market, for it is happy to sell goods that other houses would reject because they consider the value too low. Since Kent Sales will accept objects with such low estimates, the collector of limited means can often find something of interest. The fact that the sale takes the lower valued items does not mean that it is a glorified boot sale for there is usually a sprinkling of good quality, more expensive pieces. As readers of this page will know they operate on a 'tender' bid basis which seems to work quite well. The catalogues are cheaply but efficiently produced and the descriptions are usually good.

The rooms held a sale on 15 December offering their normal wide range of material, and as usual managed to get some good prices. Third Reich material continued to sell well and it was noticeable that the home market seemed far more active than overseas customers. The general impression

was that, considering the recession, currency problems, etc, the sale did well.

At this time of the year it is the usual thing to look back and to make some effort to assess the past twelve months. The questions that most dealers and collectors in arms and armour are keenly interested in are all concerned with the state of the market. Has it been improving, failing or is it just plain static. The only valid answer must be — yes!

If one makes a judgement based on the published condition of the main auction houses then things would seem to be getting worse for just before Christmas Christies announced more staff redundancies. Sotheby's employees have also been warned that more cuts are on the way in that house, and consequently morale among the staff of both houses is not exactly buoyant. As the financial pundits forecast, Christies increased their buyers' premium to match the new charge of Sotheby's although there are minor differences between the two announced rates. Based on these facts one might assume that 1993 does not offer a lot of hope or

encouragement.

However, on looking at the results of sales held during 1992 then the picture appears to be a little brighter. Christies had two of their usual high quality sales which featured the large collections from a German castle. Despite a monetary exchange rate crisis in the middle of the sales when the German mark changed in value, Christies did well for their client. Sotheby's were not lucky enough to capture a major collection but none-the-less did very well, particularly with their sales in September in London and Zurich and then at Billingshurst, all of which finished with very low BI rates. On the results of these sales the market looks more promising.

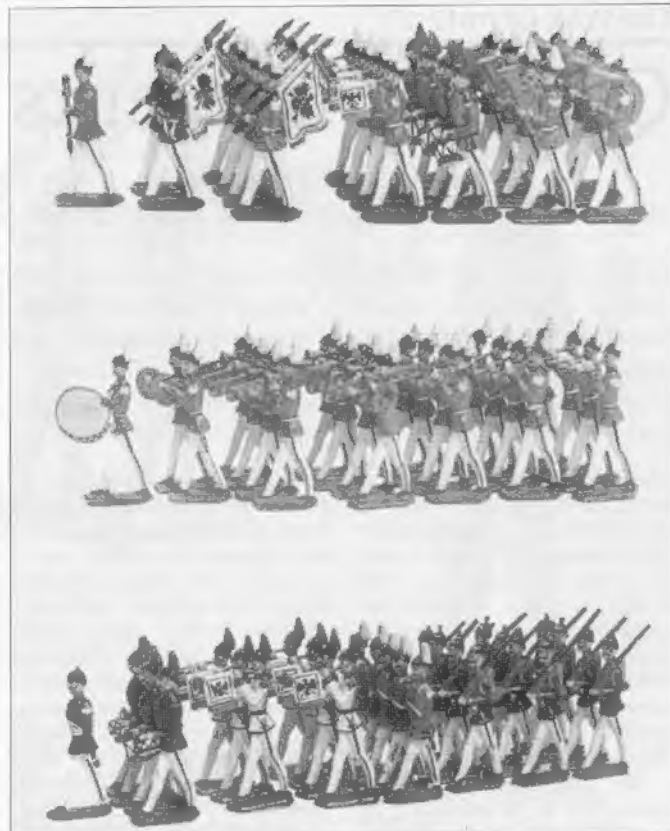
Yet that summary is just a little too glib for, although overall figures may suggest a healthy market, a closer look indicates that the market is patchy. As a generalisation — always suspect — it may be said that good things still sell well and middle range material copes but the lower end of the market is, for the big houses, much less satisfactory. In the first place there is not a great deal of interest from the deal-

ers in this material and there is the problem of cut-off values. Unless the article is worth more than a certain amount the bigger houses will not even consider including it in a sale. It may disappoint the client but it makes economic sense since the cost of cataloguing, administration and printing mean that income from a low priced item just does not cover the costs involved in selling it.

To sum up — again always risky — it seems likely that the market is certainly not collapsing but equally it is not blossoming. However, most dealers have indicated that they are, if not optimistic, not too downhearted and many feel that there may well be a hope that 1993 will see some return of confidence and a rise in the rate of cash flow. It is certainly needed. As one dealer commented, there may not be a light at the end of the tunnel but there is a faint glimmer.

**Right: Lot 914.** A collection of Imperial German toy soldiers comprising infantry and band. They are the 'semi-flat' type and all hand painted; £100.

**Below left: A Hertfordshire Yeomanry Pattern 1871 helmet** of white metal and brass complete with rose bosses, chin chain, leather liner, and black horse hair plume. Lot 1040 of the Kent Sale which sold for £780. **Right: A Yorkshire Dragoon's white metal helmet** with white horse hair plume, complete with all fittings. Lot 1041 in the same sale which realised £550.



The prices, in general, do not seem to have experienced any particular changes except for armour which attracted prices a little higher than might be expected. Those with English Civil Wars association did, perhaps a little better owing to the current celebrations of the 350th anniversary. Antique pistols, as always, sold well, especially those in good condition. One group that seems to be doing well is that of military cap badges and buttons and in their last sale Billingshurst did extremely well with groups of these. The other very steady mar-

ket is that of campaign medals.

What can be said about the approaching sales planned for 1993? Sotheby's New York sale in January promised well with some very good items. The same rooms have a very fine collection of antique, vintage and modern firearms planned for April. There is also the chance of a very fine sale of Imperial German and Third Reich medals, orders and decorations to be held at Billingshurst. Representatives of all the houses will be on the look-out for good material since finding saleable material is one of the biggest problems. Owners are not too anxious to sell with the present climate and without good material it is difficult to stimulate the market. It is a hard world.!

**Frederick Wilkinson**



A selection of edged weapons from the sale. **Left to right:** Lot 223, Third Reich Government officer's dress dagger, £950; Lot 212, Nazi dress bayonet with saw back; Lot 210, Nazi Police NCO's sword, £200; Lot 211, Luftwaffe officer's sword, £185; Lot 224, SA man's dagger with suspension strap and with original Ernst Röhm inscription, £775; Lot 213, Luftwaffe officer's second model dagger, £275; Lot 214, Greek Army Cadet's dagger,



# Quebec Voltigeurs

RENE CHARTRAND

Paintings by G.A. EMBLETON & E. LELIEPVRE

THE CANADIAN VOLTIGEURS, practically unknown outside their own country, almost single-handedly prevented the Americans capturing Montréal and thereby averted a potential British disaster. This article examines their short-lived but exemplary existence and reconstructs their uniforms.

DURING THE American War of 1812-15, the Province of Lower Canada — as the present day Québec was called — was the most important of the British North American colonies. As such, it had the largest militia to draw upon, about 60,000 men aged between 16 and 60, which was divided into regiment-like 'Divisions' of Sedentary Militia.

The province's war effort even went as far as raising its own little army of regular full-time troops. They were still called 'militia', which implies part-time service, but in wartime enlistments were usually for 18 months or the duration of the conflict. Nor did the province rely entirely on volunteers. Lower Canada also used a limited draft system, reviving a practice from the days of New France, where a number of men would be called up. Sedentary Militia captains would then be instructed to send a few men from their companies for full-time service in a provincial unit of embodied militia. In February 1812, there was no provincial force at all but by July, there were five battalions. By May 1813, this had risen to seven battalions, one corps of transport commissariat voyageurs, three light infantry companies, three troops of cavalry, one company of artillery drivers and a half-company of gunners. This little colonial army supported by its own administrative staff represented a 'regular' establishment of about 6,500 officers and men. In a European context, it could be compared with the small armies of German principalities, for instance Brunswick. The Lower Canadian units were organised the same way as the British regular troops which they were meant to support. They were totally subordinate to the British high command in North America.

This 'select embodied' army (see MI/4) could rely on its own reserve. In an emergency, it

could be joined within 24 hours by a volunteer militia force of one infantry battalion, two troops of cavalry and a company of artillery totalling about 300 officers and men. Within a few days, some Sedentary Militia Divisions near the threatened area would be called up to furnish companies. In October 1813, when two American armies were slowly approaching Montréal, thousands were called up, some being formed into the 7th and 8th temporary 'Sedentary Embodied Militia' battalions. But the Americans were beaten back and all volunteers and sedentary militias were soon released from service in the second half of November.

Detachment of some of these Lower Canadian permanent troops were sent to Upper Canada, especially the Canadian Voltigeurs, flank companies of the Embodied Militia battalions and Coleman's troop of Canadian Light Dragoons. There were some reductions and changes made in the infantry organisation during 1814, but the province kept six battalions, the commissariat voyageurs, the troops of cavalry and the artillery on a war footing until disbanded in March 1815. This amazing little army of the Napoleonic period then vanished and has been since largely forgotten.

## THE CANADIAN VOLTIGEURS

This unit, one of the best-remembered of the Canadian corps in the War of 1812, was also known under its French name *Les Voltigeurs Canadiens* besides its official name of the 'Provincial Corps of Light Infantry (Canadian Voltigeurs)'. It was a regular colonial corps, but raised under the authority and pay of the Province of Lower Canada. As a result, this regiment was under the Lower Canada Militia Law and all leg-



*The Canadian Voltigeurs recruiting, circa 1812-13. Officers had to recruit their quota of men in order to be confirmed in their commissions. As in the days of New France, much public business was done on the steps of a town's church steps in Québec. Here we see an officer extolling the virtues of military life in his company. The actual enlistment was usually done in a nearby tavern. (Reconstruction by Eugène Lelièvre, courtesy Canadian Parks Service.)*

islation affecting it was enacted in the legislative assembly in Québec City, and not in the London Parliament. Thus being an overseas 'provincial' corps, it did not appear on the Army List like other Fencible or line units. And yet, locally, it was considered to be like other Imperial 'fencible' regiments by the British High Command in North America and — an important detail — was counted as part of the British regular forces on the Army Returns.

The regiment was raised by a French Canadian officer, Major Charles-Michel de Salaberry, 60th Foot. The sight of red coats did not fill the hearts of the masses with joy, nor much hostility, but rather indifference. But, generally speaking, French Canadians disapproved of the terrible consequences of the French Revolution and were deeply suspicious of American intentions. From that time, a few sons of the eminent families obtained commissions in the British Army, under the patronage of the Duke of Kent. Thus did young Charles-Michel de Salaberry become a subaltern in the 60th Foot, in 1793,

and go to the West Indies. Somehow, he survived the fevers and the bullets, and gradually rose to the rank of Major.

He came back to Canada in 1810 to serve on the staff at Québec with Lieutenant-General Francis, Baron de Rotenburg, one of the Army's outstanding theorists. The situation in North America was worsening, while Britain was strained fighting Napoleon, yet needed Canada for the one essential 'strategic material' it could offer: wood. Wood for Britain's wooden walls of the Royal Navy; wood for its merchant marine, the lifeblood of its economy. But it could spare few regiments for Canada while fighting Napoleon.

In the General Staff offices in Québec, Major de Salaberry felt the time was ripe to raise a corps recruited in Lower Canada. He wrote up a proposal which was endorsed by General de Rotenburg and sent to Governor General Sir George Prévost. He was enthusiastic and on 15 March 1812, he approved the formation of a Provincial Corps of Light Infantry to be called the



The Canadian Voltigeurs drilling in undress uniform. Grey cap with black band; white jacket with black collar, cuffs, shoulder straps and buttons; grey trousers and short gaiters. The sergeant at left has his rank stripes and sash. An officer in green faced black with fur cap looks on the proceedings. (Reconstruction by Eugène Lelièvre, courtesy Canadian Parks Service.)



#### Canadian Voltigeurs.

Major de Salaberry was appointed commandant of the Canadian Voltigeurs on 1 April 1812. The regiment initially had six companies with an establishment of six captains, 12 lieutenants, an adjutant, a paymaster, a quartermaster, a surgeon, five staff-sergeants, 25 sergeants, 25 corporals, ten buglers and 475 privates. Most company officers had been appointed by the middle of the month and, soon thereafter, they were roaming the towns

and countryside to enlist their respective quotas of volunteers 'to be between the Age of 17 and 35 Years, and not below 5 Feet 3 Inches'. However, the province was nearly bankrupt with all the military spending, and in June the recruiting parties were recalled and the establishment reduced to 350 men.

In his original proposal, de Salaberry had wished for an additional company to be attached 'consisting of 6 chiefs and 60 warriors' to be armed

and clothed 'after their own manner'. An excellent initiative and a variable number of Iroquois and Algonquin Indians led by Captain J.-M. Lamothe of the Indian Department was attached to the Voltigeurs and proved to be outstanding scouts.

The Voltigeurs, with drafted militias and Indians, were posted south of Montréal patrolling near the American border. In November, a strong American force (estimated at about 8,000 men by the British) had assem-

An officer gives the orders for the night to a picquet of Canadian Voltigeurs which includes one of the Indians attached to the corps. This sort of duty in small groups on the forward positions was typical for Québec light infantry units. The Indian wears his own clothing, most likely a blue coat with red collar, cuffs and piping, a multicoloured sash, Indian leggings and moccasins. (Reconstruction by Eugène Lelièvre, courtesy Canadian Parks Service.)







Lieutenant-Colonel Charles-Michel de Salaberry, Canadian Voltigeurs, circa 1814-15. The uniform would be green with black facings, lace and buttons, red sash. The gold epaulettes were probably worn when he became Inspecting Field Officer of Light Troops from 11 April 1814. (Engraving after an original portrait, present location unknown, courtesy National Archives of Canada, C9226.)

bled near the border. General Dearborn, commander-in-chief of the US Army, stated his intention to march on

Montréal. But after a skirmish with militiamen in the woods, the confused Americans went back.

While armies settled into winter quarters, recruiting was again permitted for the Voltigeurs and during February and March 1813, de Salaberry had the enviable problem of having more men than he could enlist. On 5 February he had 374 NCOs and privates and on 11 March he had 438 with even more recruits on stand-by. Two days later, permission was granted to form two more companies, all eight companies to have a captain, a first lieu-

tenant, a second lieutenant, three sergeants, three corporals, a bugler and 51 privates. Ten days later, de Salaberry, promoted to lieutenant-colonel, reported the new establishment complete.

In late March 1813, four companies of the Canadian Voltigeurs were ordered to Kingston, Upper Canada, where they arrived on 13 April. For their first major action, two companies of Voltigeurs, along with other troops raised in Canada, took part in an expedition against the American naval base of Sackett's Harbor, New York, and were noted for their gallantry in action. Three of the Voltigeur companies were then sent to the Niagara frontier where they spent the summer skirmishing with American pickets to the disadvantage of the latter. In the autumn, the three companies on the Niagara were ordered back to Kingston.

In order to capture Montréal, the strategic key to the interior of Canada and its resources in wood and furs, the Americans mobilised two armies. One, coming from the south would march up from New York State along the Châteauguay river sweeping away opposition and meet another American army which would come from the west along the St Lawrence river, both armies making their junction within view of Montréal — a city which had no fortifications. The surrender of Montréal would spell doom for anything west of it. With communications and supplies cut, the British forces in Ontario and points west would have to eventually surrender.

The army marching up along the Châteauguay river from the south was about 6,000 men

strong, nearly all regulars, with a train of artillery. General Wade Hampton, a South Carolina veteran of the American Revolution, was in command. On the Canadian side of the border, there was a sense of urgency as military authorities tried to assemble as strong a force as possible south of Montréal. In mid-October, about 6,000 British regulars, embodied and recently called up sedentary militias were posted south of Montréal. The critical area of the Châteauguay River was under General de Watteville who depended upon de Salaberry for the advance posts. The Voltigeurs were involved in skirmishes near the border on 26 September and 1 October. Hampton delayed another three weeks but finally crossed the border on 21 October. The invasion was on.

The narrow Châteauguay River then had forest on either side of it with a rough road edging it on the west bank and the occasional clearing with a pio-

Canadian Voltigeurs on the March during the autumn of 1813. The figures wear the various pieces of equipment common to British troops on campaign. At the extreme left, an Indian guide wears a blue 'trade' coat with red collar and cuffs ornamented with brass buttons and yellow lace. This type and colour of coat appears to have been the most popular with Lower Canada Indians during the first half of the 19th century. He also wears mitasses, mocassins, a beaded waist sash and decorated pouch sling and is armed with musket, knife and tomahawk. (Reconstruction by G.A. Embleton, courtesy Canadian Parks Service.)



neer's cabin. A large force had to follow the road or it might get lost in the woods. In order to slow down the Americans, de Salaberry selected a bend in the river to build successive lines of abbatis out of logs and earthworks which the Americans would have to storm. On 26 October the first line of defence, under the command of de Salaberry, was manned by two companies of Voltigeurs, the light company of the Canadian Fencibles, a sedentary militia company from Beauharnois and 22 Indians. As they came into view of the abbatis, the Americans formed into a strong column under Colonel Izard; a mounted American officer advanced and shouted to the 'brave Canadians' to surrender but de Salaberry took one of his men's muskets, got up on a tree stump and ended the speech. Roaring volleys started firing from both sides as the Voltigeur buglers sounded. Izard's column quickly realised the strength of the abbatis and tried to outflank them; a line of Canadian Fencible skirmishers at that point retreated. Sensing the critical moment, de Salaberry had ordered the other unseen defence lines of embodied militia under the command of

Lieutenant-Colonel George Macdonnell to give mighty cheers and have bugles sounded everywhere. Thinking they had turned the Canadian's flank, cheering and charging Americans were met to their dismay by an enormous cheer, Indian war cries, bugle calls, and musket shots, not only from the abbatis line but from within the woods. From thinking they were victorious, the Americans now thought they had the whole British army just around the corner. They stopped and retreated. Another American flanking movement by a column led by Colonel Purdy on the east side of the river also failed. General Hampton ordered a retreat. De Salaberry ordered Indian scouts to keep track of the Americans, as he fully expected another attack the next day, and called up three more militia companies from the reserve. But the 27th came and nothing happened. Scouts reported Hampton's large army going back to the United States. The Canadians had only two killed, 16 wounded (only four Voltigeurs), three missing and three captured. The Americans had probably about 100 killed and wounded. It was an almost bloodless battle — a skirmish, really — yet it was one of the most important battles of the war since Montréal was saved. It was also the only battle in which no British line troops were involved, and the victor was a Canadian officer, Canadian Chasseurs and the Frontier Light Infantry. The year 1815 found the Voltigeurs and its parent units posted south of Montréal when news came that peace had been concluded between the United States and



Great Britain. On 24 March the Canadian Voltigeurs were disbanded.

### UNIFORMS

The uniforms of the Canadian Voltigeurs were unusual and meant to be practical for light infantry skirmishing in the woods. For that reason, red was not adopted. But not only for that reason since it was not a very popular uniform colour with French-Canadians and was likely to turn off potential volunteers. As a result, a grey uniform was chosen for the men.

Lieutenant John Hebden, Adjutant of the Canadian Voltigeurs, circa 1814-15. Green shako with black collar, cuffs, buttons and cords; green pantaloons laced black; scarlet light infantry sash; black sabre belt with gilt buckles, gilt-hilted sabre in black scabbard with gilt fittings; black boots with steel spurs. He holds a bay horse having black bridles and a green hussar-type pointed schabraque with green tassel. (Print after a portrait, location unknown, courtesy, National Archives of Canada, C25697.)

Canadian Voltigeurs skirmishing in the woods, 1813. The men wear the grey and black uniform with fur caps. The wings were introduced in 1813. Buglers seem to have had no distinction apart from their instrument which probably had a green cord. The officer is in dark green and black. (Painting by Eugène Lelièvre, courtesy Canadian Parks Service.)





An officer of the Canadian Voltigeurs 1812-13, wearing the peaked fur cap, green uniform with black collar, cuffs, cords and buttons, red light infantry sash, black sword belt, brass hilted sabre in steel scabbard. The saddle blanket is green. (Reconstruction from the various portraits by G.A. Embleton, courtesy Canadian Parks Service.)

No illustrations or relics are known to exist of the men's uniforms. Fortunately, some descriptions and clothing bills for the years 1812 and 1813 have survived because the uniforms were then made in Canada. From these, it has been possible to reconstruct in detail the uniform of the NCOs and enlisted men. The documentation is much less detailed for 1814 and 1815 as uniforms sent from England issued.

The 'Conditions' for raising the unit approved on 15 April 1812, called for 'The Clothing to be Grey with black Collar & Cuffs and black Buttons with Canadian Short Boots, Light Bear Skin Caps.' This was quite unusual in any army of the day. As a whole, it was adopted but there were many variations.

From April 1812, a bearskin cap was indeed worn and it had a black peak and band at the bottom. Other details are uncertain. In July 1812, de Salaberry reports receiving 134 'pewter bugles', presumably as cap badges. One wonders if they kept wearing these as the bearskin would probably hide much of them. They are not specified later in the relatively detailed clothing bills and one cannot see a bugle badge on Captain Viger's fur cap (see illustration). In any event, the fur caps were cheaper to make than shakos and were popular with the Voltigeurs. Another issue of bearskin caps was approved early in 1813 but de Salaberry was made aware that caps were to last two years. They were distributed with the clothing in April and were to last until 1815.

In 1814, shakos with green plumes arrived from England which surely had a bugle badge in front. But, as noted above, these may not have been issued until the early part of 1815, if at all.

The jacket, or coatee, was grey with black collar, cuffs and shoulder straps, lined with (most likely white) flannel, black buttons, and seven yards of black lace. As there was not enough to lace all the buttonholes, it appears that it was used for edging the facings, the front and the turnbacks. There



was most likely a single row of buttons down the front, three or four buttons to each cuff and perhaps on the skirts if they had pocket flaps. In early January 1813, wings were approved to be added to the uniform and black lace and fringe was supplied. The quality of material was poor for the 1812 issue; even the black velvet furnished for collars and cuffs was unsuitable, de Salaberry wishing good black cloth instead. As a result of these complaints, the quality was much better for the April 1813 issue.

Sir George Prevost had asked for 'grey cloth' jackets with

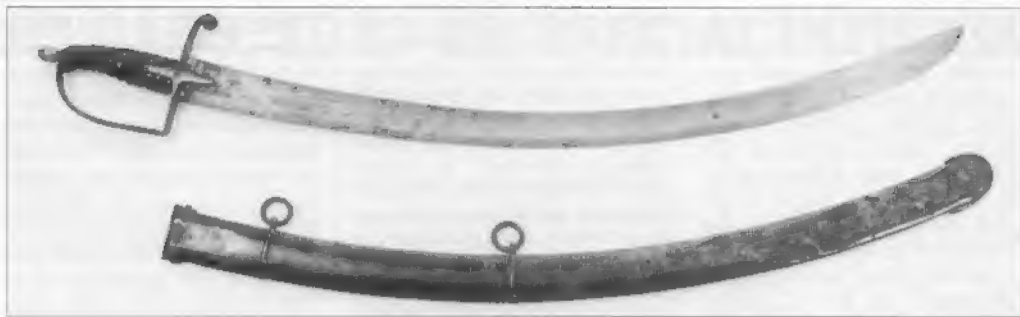
'Black Cuffs and Capes [collar]' for the Voltigeurs to be sent from England; these arrived in the middle of 1813 and were probably issued in the spring of 1814. It is very difficult to say what the English-made jacket exactly looked like. It might have been the same as before. However, it may also have been like uniforms sent to other colonial light infantry units. These garments were usually fairly plain with hardly any lace, their styling based on the jackets worn by the regular rifle units and might have been as follows: grey with black collar, pointed cuffs and shoulder straps, grey

wings laced black, three rows of black buttons in front.'

Pantaloon were to be grey but there were supply difficulties in 1812 and the Voltigeurs were issued with blue material instead. It was of very poor quality and Salaberry reported in December 1812 that three pairs per man had been worn out by marching in the woods and swamps 'in the worse weather'. The pantaloons were made by the regimental tailors. In January 1813, Governor-General Prevost instructed the commissary to exchange the blue material for grey. Thereafter, grey pantaloons



Campaign sabre worn by Lieutenant-Colonel Charles-Michel de Salaberry of the Canadian Voltigeurs during the war of 1812. It is a very plain and sturdy weapon with brass guard and steel scabbard, ideal for service in the field. (Private collection, courtesy Canadian Parks Service.)



were always issued.

Although 'Canadian Short Boots' are mentioned in April 1812 'Conditions', the Voltigeurs actually always wore shoes, which were to be 'well brushed'. Grey short gaiters would have been issued with the necessities, or made up, along with shirts and stockings. The leather stocks appear to have found little favour with De Salaberry who ordered his officers to provide their men with black velvet stocks.

There was also an undress or fatigue uniform. It seems to have been as similar as possible to that worn by the line regiments. The first clothing issue included a *gilet* — basically a sleeved waistcoat which was specified as being in white kersey in 1813. This most likely had black collar and cuffs. From July 1812, the men also

have fatigue pantaloons of *toile du pays* — homespun linen, most likely greyish, but it could be bleached white. Fatigue caps would have been made up in the regiment although some may have been issued in 1814. They had the Army's grey greatcoats and their winter clothing was described as warm and suitable. They would have had the Canadian 'beef shoes' — a type of long winter moccasin — warm flannel shirts, mitts, scarves, fur and/or wool caps. Those on winter patrols in the woods would use snowshoes.

Buglers appear to have had no particular distinction other than their instruments as there is no extra lace allotted. Sergeants had nine yards of quality black cotton lace, the

extra two yards being undoubtedly for chevrons. The four senior Staff Sergeants had nine yards of silver lace. Sergeants had sashes, probably the regulation crimson but it could have been red also, with a black central line, from 1813, none being issued previously.

Officers — like those of rifle and other colonial light infantry corps — wore a distinctive husar-type uniform. This consisted of a green jacket with no tails — a dolman — with black collar, cuffs, braid across the chest and decorating the cuffs, three rows of black buttons; green pantaloons; scarlet light infantry sash with cords and tassels; black boots; fur cap and possibly a green shako with black cord towards the end of the war. There was also an undress 'Regimental Surtout' which may have been green with black collar, cuffs and buttons.<sup>2</sup>

### ARMS AND ACCOUTREMENTS

It was de Salaberry's intention to arm the Canadian Voltigeurs with rifles and sword-bayonets. Indeed, an early recruiting broadside mentioned that the Voltigeurs would be trained in rifle shooting and be armed with rifles 'and sabres'. The proposed 'Conditions' for raising the corps only mentioned rifles but the approved version cast a shadow by stating that the arms were to be 'Rifles or Light Infantry Muskets'. Supplies of military arms at Québec were at a very low ebb in 1812 with only 4,000 muskets with bayonets, a thousand 'carbines with bayonets' and 95 rifles (no bayonets — these may have been presentation rifles for Indians rather than Baker's pattern) in store to arm the militia and volunteers. The Voltigeurs were issued with stands of 'carbines' in early June 1812. In all likelihood, these weapons were simply the 39-inch India-Pattern muskets with bayonets. In February 1813, de Salaberry again requested rifles for his men but nothing came of

it and the Voltigeurs carried muskets until disbanded. The men, of course, never received 'sabres'.<sup>1</sup>

The accoutrements were of black leather. They seem to have been made locally as an inspector noted in late October 1813 that they were not quite standard being 'probably not made by a regular Accoutrement Maker'. These may have been replaced by a regular issue in the spring of 1814. As with most units of Lower Canadian embodied corps, no distinctive belt-plate is known and they probably simply had a brass, plain oval belt-plate.

Officers were armed with sabres and it is obvious there was no particular pattern judging from the portraits of Captains Viger and Hebdén, and de Salaberry's own campaign sabre. It seems the favoured style was for a weapon with a good curved blade with a yellow metal 'D' guard. The scabbards might be of black leather with brass or gilt mountings or of steel. The sword belt was black and worn around the waist. The Voltigeur officers did not have the black pouch and belt with attached whistle and chain but simply had the silver whistle attached to a narrow black ribbon, as Captain Viger did, or a gold chain as Lieutenant Prendergast. It seems some officers had sabretaches as that is where Captain Viger kept his notebook. It was probably plain black. Among the non-official weapons might be a musket, mostly used for hunting, and perhaps pistols.

### EPILOGUE

In 1815, the Canadian Voltigeurs (and Chasseurs with whom they were brigaded) ceased existing, and the officers and men went home. From then on, legend took over for de Salaberry, who died in 1829, and his Voltigeurs who would never quite vanish. They had caught the imagination of the people and won admiration and lasting fame. Poetry was published extolling and exaggerating the martial values of the gallant band who, as one poet put it, like the 300



Captain Jacques Viger,  
Canadian Voltigeurs, circa  
1812-13.



Spartans against the Persians, had stopped the American hordes. Medals followed presentation swords, and eventually, statues, primary school books, street names of 'De Salaberry' and 'Châteauguay' in almost every Québec town, and sometimes, a 'rue des Voltigeurs' to be found as well. Over the years, some Québec regiments of the Canadian Forces have carried the names of 'Voltigeurs' and several still do—for instance the *Régiment des Voltigeurs de Québec*. De Salaberry and his light infantrymen vanished long ago, but in all these ways, their heritage lives on in French Canada. **MT**

#### Sources

The original correspondence concerning the Canadian Voltigeurs and other units is in the National Archives of Canada, RG8, vols C796 to C798 and C1220 to C1223; RG9, IA1, vol 6, inventory of Lt E.L. Prendergast mentions the 'Regimental Surlout', IA3, vol 5, MG24, C9, Order Book of Captain B. Juchereau's Company, 1812. The Public Records Office War Office 17, vols 1516 to 1519 include the Canadian Voltigeurs with the line and Fencibles from June 1812 in the monthly returns Colonial Office 42, vols 150 to 159, has much of the correspondence to and from England; Archives du Séminaire de Québec, *Ma Saberdache*, vol 2 which is Captain Viger's correspondence. Published unit studies are few but short ones were published by Cruikshank, Ernest A., in the *Canadian Military Institute, Selected Papers*, 'The Canadian Voltigeurs', No 10 (1897-1899) and 'The Frontier Light Infantry', No 12 (1902) but should be used with caution; Chartrand, R., 'The Canadian Chasseurs', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, vol LXVII (winter 1989); Guérard Michelle *The Militia of the Battle of Châteauguay: A Social History*, Parks Canada, Ottawa, 1983, is not quite a unit history but recommended; Wohler, I. Patrick, *Charles de Salaberry, Soldier of Empire, Defender of Quebec*, Dundurn Press, Toronto, 1984, a good, recent and only biography in English.

#### Notes

1. In the reconstruction of the uniform, the author must mention unforgettable sessions spent with fellow Curator Barry Rich in allocating the seven yards of tape and the 30 small and four (one bill has seven) large buttons to each Voltigeur suit of clothing. The coat of a private of line infantry had 12 yards of 'looping lace' for buttonholes and edging the collar and shoulder straps, 18 large buttons (four each cuff and pocket flap, two at the back waist), 12 small (ten in front, two at the shoulder straps); light infantry had 12 yards of 'looping' buttonhole lace and 30 small

buttons placed the same way; rifles and some overseas light infantry had jackets with 44 'breast buttons' (no others are mentioned), three yards of binding for 'feathering' (piping or edging) the 'collar, straps & cuffs only'. As can be seen, the light infantry comes the closest to the Voltigeurs (the four large buttons might have been for trousers), but they only had seven yards of lace, not enough for the buttonholes but sufficient for edging not only the facings but the whole coat. The lace for wings added in 1813 was an additional five yards. Material for wings in line regiments is also accounted separately. Closest to the Voltigeurs is the Royal Staff Corps infantry with four yards of white for edging the facings and four yards of blue binding for edging the coat. We cannot guarantee our reconstitution is exact, but it should not be too far off. Quantities based on Pearce Taylor's notebook, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa. Canadian Parks Service Conservator Keith Peverly experimented a great deal with leather and bearskin before coming up with a good, light bearskin cap. We can understand why the men liked it after trying it on and then trying on a shako. My thanks to my colleagues at Parks Canada, to artists G.A. Embleton, Eugène Lelèpvre and also to Parks photographer Claude Lefebvre.

2. Officers' uniforms are based on the portraits of Captain Heiden (National Archives of Canada), Captain Viger (Université de Montréal), Captain Globensky, and Lieutenant-Colonel de Salaberry (Château de Ramezay); NAC, RG9; Quéllet, Fernand, *Rapport de l'archiviste de la province de Québec, 1955-1957*, Québec, 1957, p9, quoting the memoirs of Amédée Papineau who described a now unlocated portrait of Captain Viger wearing a green coat all laced with black brandebourgs. The portraits clearly show scarlet sashes rather than crimson. The only explanation we can offer is that crimson silk sashes were in short supply in 1812 and de Salaberry must have opted, with permission, to adopt available scarlet sashes instead. For instance, we know that the officers of the 2nd Battalion Select Embodied Militia, had no sashes until supplies arrived from England in 1813.

3. True carbines were not manufactured in large numbers at this time, had a barrel length between 33 inches and 42 inches and a .65 bore. The presence of over a thousand 'carbines', a tremendous number, in Québec can only be explained that these were in fact .39-inch India Patterns as opposed to the older Short Land patterns also in store. Barrels for making Light Infantry muskets were only ordered in quantity from late October 1811. See Backmore, Howard, *British Military Firearms 1650-1850*, London, 1961.

## THIRD REICH UNIFORMS

A NUMBER OF both official and unofficial insignia were often worn on both peaked and unpeaked field caps. The range of these insignia is almost legion, so this article will identify only those most likely to be encountered by the reader and collector. This is particularly so with Naval caps; in many cases the use of these badges extended down not just to Flotilla level but to individual vessels. There are literally hundreds of these individual ship's badges, a major study in their own right, so they are excluded here.

### OFFICIAL INSIGNIA

#### Army

**The Edelweiss:** Stamped from thin sheet metal, with a number of holes around the stem and leaves to allow it to be stitched to the cap. The stems are often a separate piece, in yellow metal, attached by prongs. The Edelweiss was either directly attached to the left flap of the Bergmütze or M43 Cap, or first sewn to a dark green backing cloth which in turn was sewn to the cap flap. Worn by Mountain Division personnel.

**The Jäger Oakleaves:** Stamped from grey metal (usually zinc or aluminium) and consisting of a spray of three oakleaves with a single acorn. Attached to the left side flap of the M43 Cap or the M34/M38 Field Cap by prongs on its reverse. Examples also exist with holes provided for sewing to the cap. Worn by Jäger Division personnel from October 1942.

**The Ski-Jäger Badge:** Introduced in 1944 for wear on the M43 cap by members of the Ski-Jäger Brigade, this badge was similar to the Jäger badge but with the addition of a single ski, pointing forward, overlapping the Oakleaves spray.

**Totenkopf Badge for Kavallerie Units:** A tradition badge intended for the Schirmmütze but also unofficially tolerated on field caps. This particular pattern was similar to the pattern worn on the collar patch by Panzer personnel with the black

*Hauptmann Michael of Reiter Regiment 6 wearing the traditional Totenkopf Badge of that unit on his M38 Feldmütze*





# GERMAN FIELD CAPS, 1933-45: SPECIAL INSIGNIA

Panzer jacket, the Panzer insignia itself having been closely modelled on the traditional Prussian cavalry Totenkopf. The badge was struck from silvered metal or aluminium and was worn by members of the Regimental Staff and I Bataillon/Kavallerie Regiment 5 'Feldmarschall von Mackensen'.

**Totenkopf Badge for Infanterie Units:** Similar to the previous badge, but with the skull sitting atop, rather than superimposed upon, the crossed bones. Worn by Regimental Staff, I and II Bataillon, 13 and 14 Kompanie all of Infanterie Regiment 17, and II Bataillon, Kavallerie Regiment 17.

**The 'Schwedter' Adler:** This insignia consisted of a crowned Prussian Dragoon Eagle, holding a sword and sceptre, in gilt metal, and was worn by Regimental Staff and 2 and 4 Squadrons of Kavallerie Regiment 6, and Kradschutzen Bataillon 3.

All of these three traditional badges were worn placed between the eagle and swastika and national cockade insignia on the field cap.

## SEMI-OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL BADGES

**Windhund (Greyhound):** Worn by members of the 'Windhund' Division, 116 Panzer Division, this badge consisted of a small grey metal horizontal oval badge, showing a running greyhound over three stylised tufts of grass. The background was black with the raised design in silver grey. It was attached by two small prongs, or by being sewn to the cap. Worn on the left side flap of Feldmützen (see photo, *MI/55*, p40).

**Sardinienschild:** Worn on the left flap of the Feldmütze by members of 90 Panzergrenadier Division, this badge was stamped out of thin sheet metal and was a stylised map of Sardinia with a sword superimposed diagonally thereon. Introduced in mid-1943.

**1 Panzer Division:** Personnel from 1 Panzer Division wore a stamped metal oakleaf emblem sewn to the left flap of the Feldmütze, 1943-1945.

**Duenkirkenschild:** Often erroneously described as an arm shield, this was a commemorative insignia for those involved in the defense of the Dunkirk 'fortress' 1944-45. Stamped from thin sheet metal, it was to have been attached to

GORDON WILLIAMSON

HERE WE EXAMINE those official and semi-official badges sometimes found pinned or sewn to the field caps of army and air force ground troops.

the left side flap of the Feldmütze. Its rarity today suggests that very few were issued.

In addition to the above, the Eagle and Swastika Shield from the Tropical Pith Helmet was occasionally worn on the left side of the Tropical Peaked Field Cap, and the SS metal Totenkopf cap badge is occasionally found pinned to the side of Army Panzer Feldmützen, as is the small metal Totenkopf from the Panzer collar patch.

### Luftwaffe

Luftwaffe troops stationed in high mountain regions on sig-

nals, anti-aircraft duties, etc., often wore the Army metal edelweiss on the left flap of the Luftwaffe Bergmütze.

The 8th Fallschirmjäger Division commanded by paratrooper General Eugen Meindl as part of his II Fallschirm Korps 1944-45 also wore an unofficial Feldmütze badge of a twisted oval rope border containing a heraldic Knights Helm over a stylised letter M.

Other than these two, no other badges were worn with any frequency on the Luftwaffe Feldmützen, though photographic evidence exists of at

least some degree of wear of the SS metal Totenkopf cap badge on the side of the tropical peaked Feldmütze by members of Panzer Regiment Hermann Göring in Sicily and southern Italy in 1943/44.

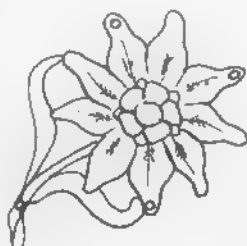
Apart from the cloth Mountain Troop edelweiss worn on the left side of the SS-Bermütze, little is known of any unofficial unit level badges worn on SS Feldmützen. Individual unit identities within the Waffen-SS were already well served by the wide range of cufftitles and distinctive collar patches.

### Acknowledgements

would like to thank the following for their assistance in the preparation of this article: Josef Chantia, Jak Ma Imann Showell, Hans Ehrlich Karck, Ernst Barkmann, Heinrich Springer and Erwin Bartmann.

Key to drawings. 1. The Gebirgsjäger edelweiss badge for the Bergmütze. 2. The Jäger Oakleaves Clasp for the M43 Cap. 3. The Ski Jäger M43 Cap Badge. 4. The Cavalry-Pattern Totenkopf Tradition Badge. 5. The Infantry Brunswick Pattern Totenkopf Tradition Badge. 6. The 'Schwedter' Adler, Traditional Dragoon Eagle Badge. 7. The Windhund Badge of 116 Panzer Division. 8. The Sardinienschild. 9. The Oakleaf Badge of 1 Panzer Division. 10. The 8th Fallschirmjäger Division 'Meindl' Cap Badge. 11. The Duenkirkenschild Battle Commemorative Cap Badge.

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# Peninsular Adventures of the 2/87th Foot

JOHN SLY

LINKING TWO themes around the battle of Barrosa in 1811, one the story of three soldiers who took part and the other the published discrepancies in casualty returns, this article shows that despite the number of books and articles on the Peninsular campaign, a great deal of original research remains to be done.

CERTAIN BATTLES of the Peninsular War will be forever connected, by military historians, with particular regiments, and the battle of Barrosa, fought on 5 March 1811, will always be associated with the 2nd Battalion of the 87th Foot. Although this regiment's capture of a French Eagle is remembered above anything else, it is obvious that the battalion did more than this to achieve fame. In his despatch written the day after the battle, Lieutenant-General Thomas Graham drew attention to the fact that the 'animated charges of the 87th Regiment were most conspicuous', and this was how the regiment's nickname of the *Faugh-a-Ballagh* ('Clear the way') originated. Paradoxically, it is almost certain that the 2/87th found itself under Graham's command in the Cadiz garrison because of indiscipline.

In May 1803 the breakdown of the Peace of Amiens led to the expansion of the army and, as a result of the Additional Forces Act, four Irish regiments of foot — the 27th, 87th, 88th and 89th — were allowed to

raise second battalions. The 2/87th was raised in autumn 1804, and spent the next three months recruiting in its allotted counties of Galway, Tipperary and Clare. Assuming, therefore, that the battalion largely comprised Gaelic-speaking soldiers from the mid-west of Ireland, Richard Walsh, a Dubliner, who enlisted at the comparatively tender age of 16 on 25 June 1805; and Benjamin Brant, who was an Englishman from Bishbury, near Wolverhampton, when he joined on 25 July 1808, may have been untypical of their comrades in arms.

Brant was the older man, aged 26 on his enlistment into the 87th. He was above average height for the time, standing 5 feet 8 inches, had sandy hair and hazel eyes, and was a whitesmith by trade. He was also, unusually, a veteran by the time he joined the 2/87th Foot, having changed units twice: the reasons for these changes are obscure, as they are not recorded on his Chelsea pension papers. This document purports to show that he

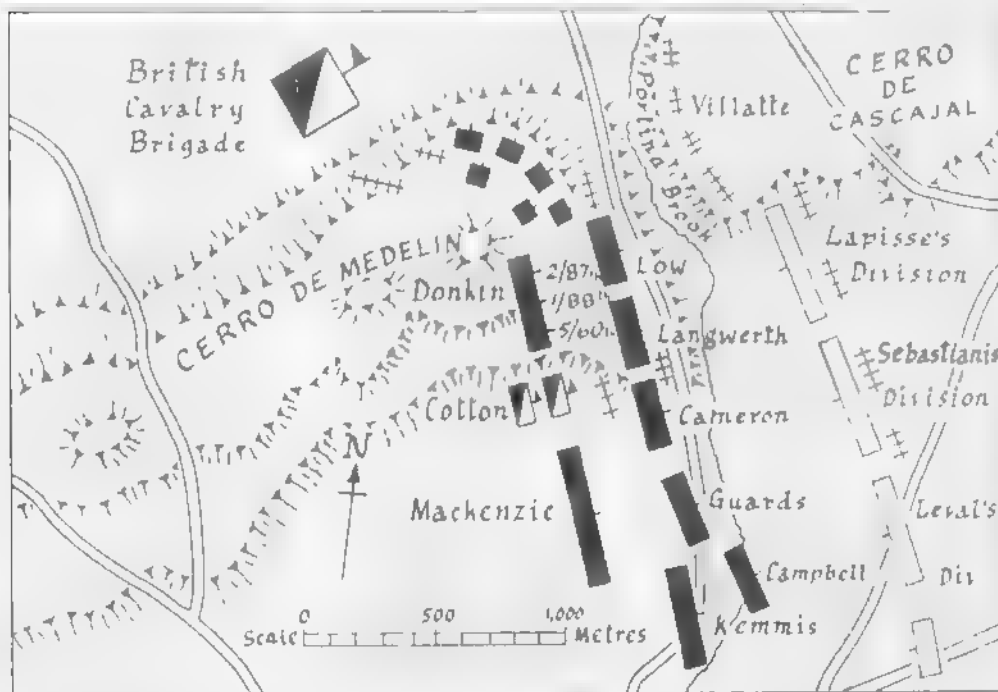


had originally enlisted into the 1st Dragoons on 11 July 1803. On 16 July 1805 he was recorded as transferred into the 7th Royal Veteran Battalion. On 24 February 1808 Brant was shown as discharged from the 7th Veterans, but only four months later he seemed to have decided to join the 2/87th Foot.

*Hugh Gough, CO of the 2/87th until wounded on 28 July 1809. An engraving dating from two years earlier.*

Research shows<sup>2</sup> that Brant had not actually left the 1st Dragoons until 24 January 1807, when he was transferred to the 7th Veterans. The relevant payroll for that unit<sup>3</sup> gives no record of Ben Brant at any time in 1807 or 1808. Moving to the musters for the 2/87th for 1808<sup>4</sup>, we find that he was recorded as having 'volunteered' from the 11th Veterans on 25 February 1808 (this may be explained by the fact that the 11th Veteran Battalion was formed by the transfer of five companies from the 7th in April 1807). The musters for the 11th Veterans<sup>5</sup> confirm his transfer, but as there are no records prior to April 1807, no further light can be shed on his transfer from the 1st Dragoons. On 24 January 1809 Brant was recorded as 'Sick at Hulsea'; he remained sick there when the battalion sailed for the Peninsular, and joined at Lisbon in June.

Richard Walsh, on the other hand, was a much more conventional serviceman, fitting perhaps ideally the career pattern of his time. His Chelsea



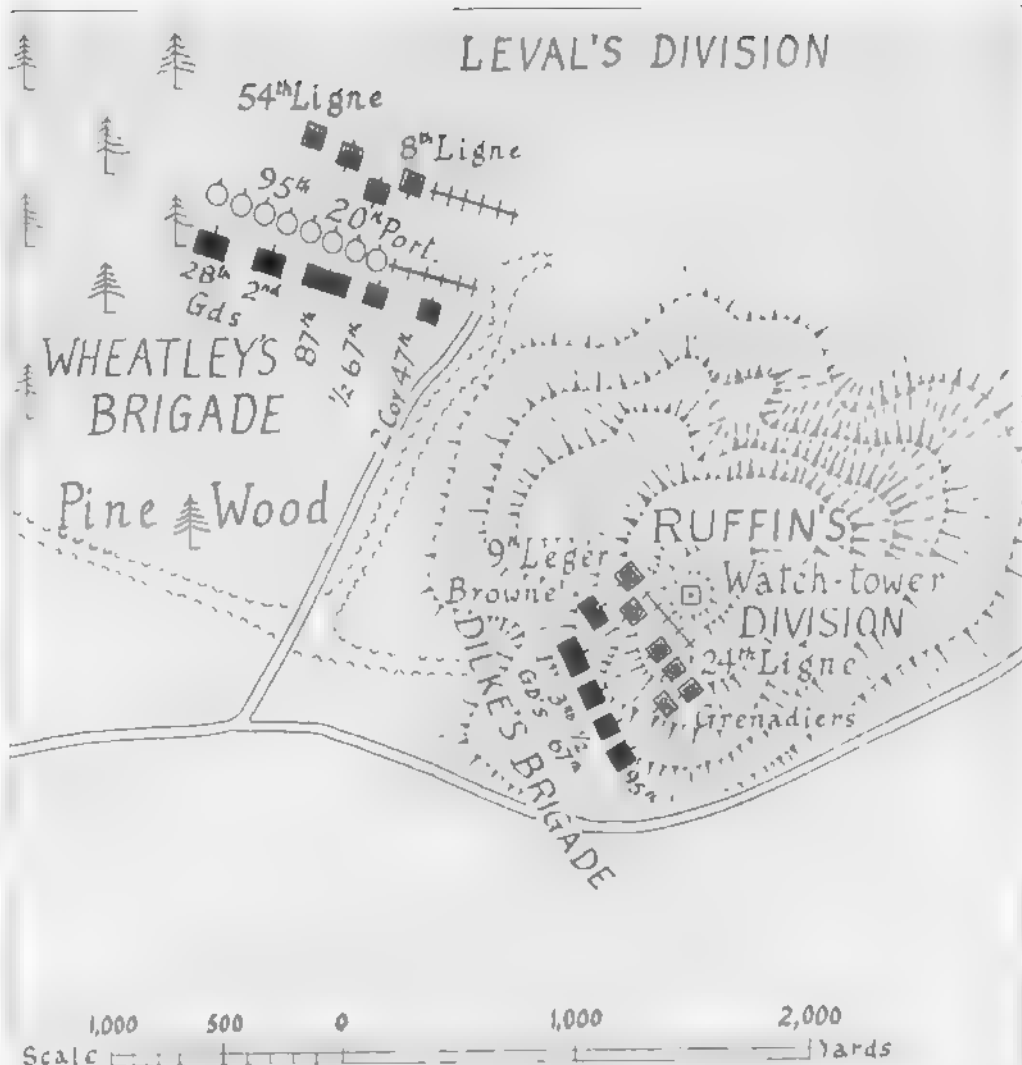


pension document<sup>6</sup> shows that he was a weaver by trade, and of more or less average height (5 feet 4 inches), with light-brown hair and grey eyes. He served only in the 2/87th, was promoted twice, and was discharged as a sergeant. He was, in fact, almost a model soldier.

The third member of our trio was Ralph Johnson, an enigmatic figure. He was very well connected in military circles: the letter of recommendation supporting his application for an Ensigncy<sup>7</sup> was written by his uncle, Henry Johnson. Ralph's commission was gazetted on 11 December 1806, at which time Uncle Henry had been a Lieutenant-General since June 1799, and Governor of Ross Castle since June 1801. By the time he wrote to support nephew Ralph's application for a Lieutenant-Colonelcy in 1829, he had become a full General, a Baronet and a GCB. With such influential backing Ralph probably had only to stay alive to have a successful career. On 18 November 1807 he was promoted Lieutenant without purchase, apparently<sup>8</sup> 'to make room for an officer from the Wexford Militia'. This was the rank he held when the 2/87th Foot found itself with the 1/88th and the 5/60th in Colonel Rufane Shaw Donkin's brigade of Major-General Mackenzie's 3rd Division when Wellesley set out from Abrantes on 27 June 1809 against Marshal Claude-Victor Perrin, duc de Bellune, in central Spain.

However high Wellesley's hopes may have been, the next month was a military nightmare: unreliable allies and chronic lack of provisions made any tactical decision an impossibility. Instead of joining with Wellesley to overwhelm Victor on 22 July at Talavera, Don Gregorio Garcia de la Cuesta refused to fight. When he did advance it was to meet not only Victor, but also the forces of King Joseph and General Sebastiani: 46,000 seasoned French troops concentrated near Torrijos persuaded the Spanish to retreat to Talavera and the defensive position prepared by Wellesley. Although this is not the place to discuss the details of the battle of Talavera, there are two aspects of it that intimately affect the 2/87th: the preliminary affair at the Casa de Salinas; and the location of Donkin's brigade during the main engagement.

The first incident has become notable largely because Wellesley was nearly captured,



but it had more important tactical consequences. Mackenzie's division was waiting to withdraw from the Alberche river where it had been covering the retreat of the Spaniards, and to cross the plain towards the allied position. Unfortunately Mackenzie had burnt some huts on the eastern bank, and the consequential smoke acted as a screen for the advance of General Lapisse's infantry division which had forded the river and had begun to infiltrate the positions of Mackenzie's soldiers spread out among the olive groves. Unforgivably, not enough pickets had been posted to warn of a surprise attack. Where the blame for this dereliction of basic military duty should be laid is not clear, but Marcus Cunliffe, in his history of the 87th<sup>9</sup>, puts the blame on Donkin who, 'apparently let his men lie down in the shade of the trees without having taken any adequate defence measures'.

Whoever's mistake it was, it was costly. Sir Charles Oman, in his classic work *A History of the Peninsular War*<sup>10</sup>, stated that 'the assault fell upon the

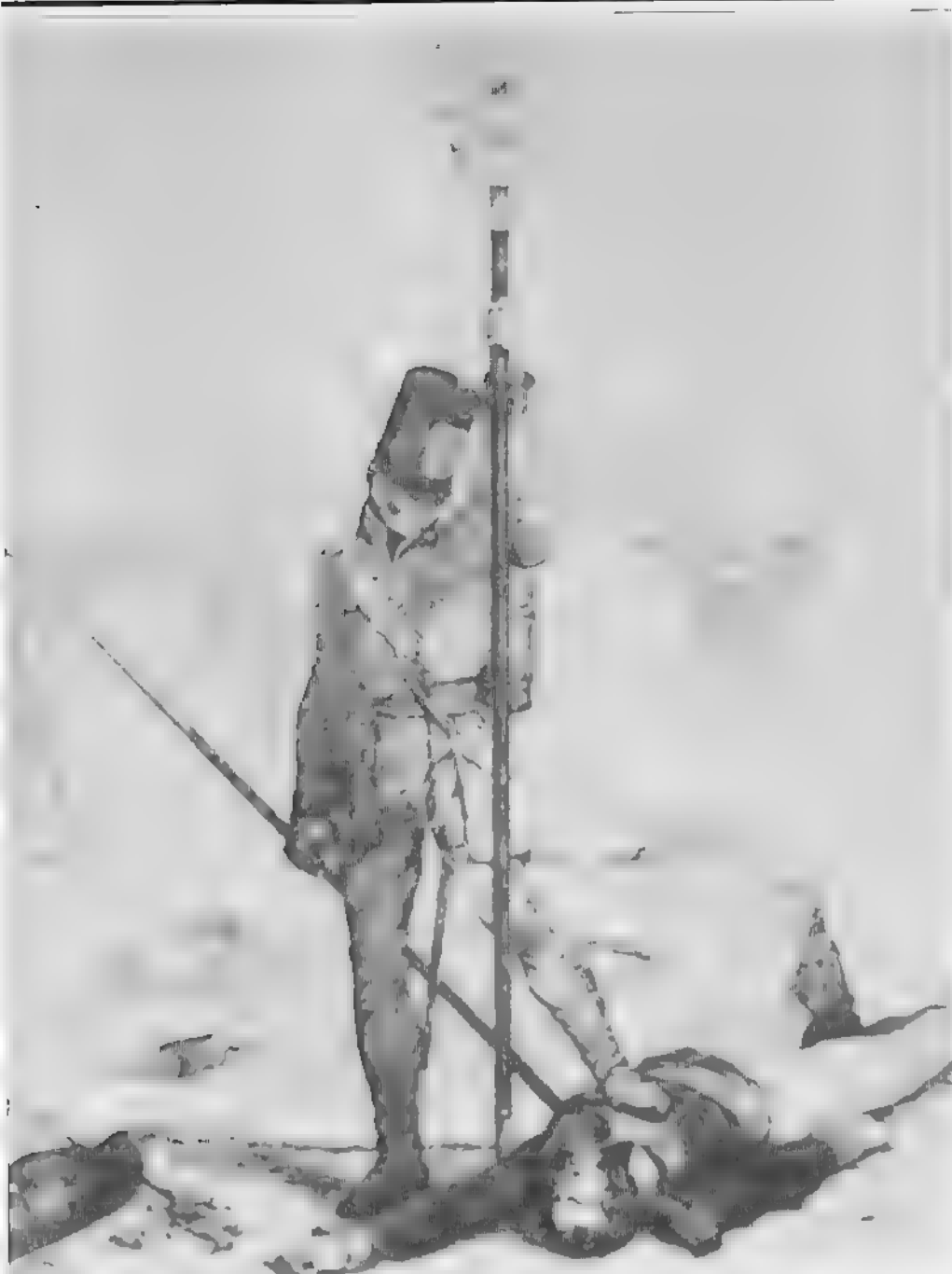
whole front of Donkin's brigade, and on the left regiment [the 2/31st] of that of Mackenzie himself. So furious and unexpected was it, that the 87th, 88th and 31st were all broken, and driven some way to the rear, losing about eighty prisoners.' He quoted total casualty figures for the division of 440.

Wellesley quickly pulled the 1/45th Foot and the 5/60th out of the wood, and rallied the division on their stand. These two battalions, together with Anson's cavalry, then covered the withdrawal of the division across the plain to the relative safety of the allied line. What happened when they reached it seems to be another point of controversy, and this is important in trying to assess the role the 2/87th played in the rest of the battle. Wellesley's despatch specified that 'Colonel Donkin [was] placed... further upon the left, in the rear of the King's German Legion'. Oman described Donkin's brigade as lying 'high up the hill [the Cerro de Medellin], directly in the rear of Low's brigade of the King's German Legion'. Sir William Napier, in his *English*

*Battles and Sieges in the Peninsula* (1855), stated that 'Colonel Donkin, seeing the hill on the extreme left unoccupied, crowned it with the other brigade, and thus accidentally filled the position' (my italics).

It is generally agreed that Donkin's Brigade held ground on the south-east of the Cerro de Medellin, and it is therefore hard to understand how the brigade could not have been involved in the night attack by General Ruffin's troops. Looking briefly at the evidence, and taking into account the disposition of the troops, it is clear that Donkin's Brigade (and therefore the 2/87th) must have been in action, although Oman does not mention the brigade once in his account, writing only that Ruffin's game Léger Regiment took Low's Brigade of the King's German Legion totally by surprise, broke the 7th Battalion and dispersed the 5th. After this, apparently, the French columns 'went straight on up the Cerro, and in a few minutes were nearing its crest'. Conversely, Napier stated that Victor ordered Lapisse 'to assail the German Legion as a diversion for Ruffin... The assault





Sergeant Masterson captures the Eagle of the 8th at Barrosa. Etching after Denis Dighton, published May 1811

was vigorous and though Donkin beat back the French in his front, many of them turned his left and won the height in his rear.'

The 2/87th played very little part in the events of 28 July, but it had to suffer a French cannonade for much of the day; indeed, Oman stated in his other famous work, *Wellington's Army 1809-1814*, that 'Donkin's Brigade, Wellington's last reserve [a description not recorded anywhere in his narrative of the battle], which was never engaged with infantry all day, lost 195 men without firing a shot...'. Strangely, the casualty figures quoted by the authorities do not seem to reflect this, nor do they apparently relate to

the information in the regimental musters.

Excluding the figures for wounded (because the paylists do not record these), the official despatch, written by Wellesley the day after the battle (29 July) and published in the *London Gazette* on 15 August, gave the losses for the 2/87th on 27 July as one officer and 26 other ranks killed, with 34 missing; the figures for 28 July were nine other ranks killed and five missing. The original paylist in the PRO<sup>1</sup> gives figures of 25 killed for 27 July, 18 for 28 July and three men died of wounds later, a discrepancy of at least eight in terms of the fatalities. However, the great discrepancy is in the figures for the missing, as the paylist records no less than 130

prisoners of war, all of them paid to 3 August, the day the army retreated from the Talavera position. To reconcile the difference it can only be suggested that, when the battalion set off on its retreat to Portugal, it left 91 wounded men in Talavera, nominally in the care of the Spanish, who later left them to become prisoners of the French. It looks as though the date in the muster was inserted very much *post hoc* to regularise a confused situation.

Frying to pin down the correct number of casualties is complicated even more by Cunliffe, who, although giving no specific source for his totals, gave figures for fatal casualties of one officer and 110 other

ranks, although the official return put it at 35, and the musters recorded only 43; these two figures might be reconciled if allowances are made for the administrative confusion in an exhausted army immediately after a major battle, but Cunliffe's figure is so different that it must be treated with great suspicion.

Again, Cunliffe recorded the number of men of the 2/87th in action as 826; Oman's figure was 599, giving as his source 'the morning state of July 25, 1809'. Although the original muster roll is ambivalent in some cases, a careful count of the NCOs and men who can be assumed to have been present on 24 July 1809, excluding all men otherwise identifiably absent, is 908. Unfortunately there is no return extant in the PRO for the months between May and October 1809 for comparison.

At the individual level, Richard Walsh was wounded in the left shoulder, and Ralph Johnson was listed in Wellington's despatch as severely wounded. How or when these two returned to duty with the battalion is not known, but it is unlikely that they were among the troops who, together with the rest of Donkin's Brigade and the Light Brigade under Robert Craufurd, were sent in advance by Wellesley on 5 August to reach and hold the river crossing at Almaraz before Soult — who was threatening the British lines of communication with Portugal — could do the same thing. They succeeded and held it for two weeks, allowing the rest of the 18,000 men of the ragged and starving British army to cross the Tagus at Arzobispo and struggle into a defensive position behind them. Never did the Lord Wellington (as he became after the 'victory' of Talavera which cost him a third of his army) come as close to losing the Peninsula as he did then. On 20 August, unable to overcome his supply problem, he began to retreat into Portugal.

In September the 2/87th was not only a weak battalion with an incapacitated commanding officer (Hugh Gough had been wounded on 28 July) but also, according to an order issued by Wellington at Badajoz on 24 September, with a discipline problem: 'The Commander of the Forces desires that Colonel Peacocke will pay attention to the state of discipline (meaning... habits of obedience to orders, subordination, regularity and interior economy) of the



2nd Battalion 83rd Regiment and 2nd Battalion 87th Regiment, as well as to their parade discipline and drill'. As if to underline this, Arthur Bryant<sup>13</sup> pointed out that 'with so large a proportion of Irish militiamen in the ranks discipline was almost as much a problem on shore as it had been a decade earlier at sea'. The battalion was ordered into garrison, first in Lisbon, then, in February 1810, in Cadiz, under Thomas Graham.

Although it is unnecessary here to fight the Barrosa campaign again, an outline of the course of events is necessary in order to understand Graham's amazing victory. Soult's attempt to relieve Massena besieging Wellington on the lines of Torres Vedras included the taking of some of the troops besieging Cadiz under the command of Victor. Once it was obvious that the French were removing enough troops to give the allies numerical superiority, Graham was keen to attack. The final plan involved taking most of the garrison of Cadiz by ship to Tarifa (bad weather changed this to Algeciras) and attacking Victor's army from behind. In order to secure the speedy agreement and co-operation of the Spanish general Manuel La Pena, Graham agreed to serve under his command ('a cardinal mistake', according to Oman) and the attacking force of nearly 5,000 British, 9,500 Spanish and 300 Portuguese, finally set off for Cadiz in appalling weather on 28 February.

Exhausted by unnecessary night marches in dreadful conditions, the allied force found itself at daybreak on 5 March on the Cerro del Puerco, near the town of Barrosa. There was no sign of the enemy because Victor had planned to lure his enemy into the trap of straggling along the coast road, making relatively simple an attack on the flank and from behind from concealed positions. The Spanish advance towards the Isle de Leon was confronted by General Villatte's division, and Graham was ordered to reinforce the Spaniards. At about noon, and against his better judgment, he led his contingent into dense pine forest, leaving behind a small force on the Cerro under Colonel John Frederick Browne, consisting of the two flank companies each of the 1/9th, 1/28th and 2/82nd, making a weak 'battalion' of 536 (Oman's figures).

At about 12.30 Victor ordered Leval and Ruffin to

attack. Leval and his infantry division (1/ and 2/8th Ligne, 1/ and 2/54th Ligne and the 1/45th Ligne, and a mixed battalion of Grenadier companies) was to take Graham in flank, and Ruffin to take the Cerro. About half an hour later Browne was forced to retire in Graham's wake as a division of

some 2,500 Frenchmen attacked him. Graham reasoned that to continue to march towards La Pena would be even more militarily disastrous than to stand and fight, and he rapidly gave orders to attack the French before they could finalise their formation. Dilkes' brigade of some 1,300 Guards

was to attack Ruffin on the Cerro, with Browne's men going ahead as a delaying force while Dilkes formed up. At the same time Wheatley's Brigade was to attack Leval, screened by Barnard's 100-strong flank battalion of four companies of the 3/95th, and two of Portuguese.

*Another version of Sergeant Masterson taking the Eagle of the 8th as depicted by Charles Hamilton Smith in an aquatint by J.C. Stadler published in January 1813. This plate is something of a curiosity because it depicts Masterson wearing the 1812 uniform and shako, while the inverted chevrons are a mystery. Although the best known of the three plates and the probable source of Lejeune's painting of the same action which duplicates the errors — this is probably not the one modellers should work from. A possible explanation is that Hamilton Smith, who specifically intended to illustrate the 1812 uniform, merely took a famous incident as his basis?*





Needless to say, the attacks of Barnard's and Browne's flank battalions were suicidal, and they suffered accordingly; but at least the two brigades were given time to form up. The infantry was supported by a battery of ten guns under Major Duncan which was soon firing shrapnel into the French as they tried to manoeuvre, causing serious casualties. The bulk of Wheatley's brigade then came out of the wood to face the fire of the entire enemy division of some 4,000 men, who had by now achieved some organisation after the initial cannonade and the assault of the light infantry companies. Even considering the fatigue and the poor physical state of the men, it was an impressive array of British infantry, although somewhat low in numbers (according to Oman)

On the left of the line the 1/28th comprised 20 officers and 437 men. On their right were seven officers and 204 men of the 2/Coldstream Guards. Then came the 2/87th, with 32 officers and 334 men; the right wing of the 2/67th (about 250 men), and finally the two flank companies of the 2/47th. As soon as the light infantry had cleared the front, the British line, untroubled by the almost totally ineffective French artillery, moved forward against the French columns, which in their turn were advancing hesitantly.

Oman<sup>4</sup> described events thus: 'The fight, owing to the French centre being slightly advanced, began a little earlier there than on the wings, the first clash being between the column of the French 2/8th, led by Vigo-Roussillon, and the line of the 2/87th, led by that enthusiastic fighter, Major Gough... Each insists that he kept down the fire of his men till they were within a very short distance of the enemy — sixty yards, says Vigo-Roussillon, twenty five, says Gough. There was then a single volley exchanged, and the French column, much the harder hit of the two, broke up.' Cunliffe's description is much more evocative: 'The French fire brought down some of the 87th, but this was nothing compared to the fire that poured in upon their concentrated ranks. The whole front rank went down: those behind tumbled over those in front; the column swerved sideways, jostling the parallel column of the first battalion of the 8th, who had also felt the effect of the British volley. The two locked together, a jumbled mass of dead, dying, wounded, and terrified men.'

When Graham gave orders to charge, the 87th 'were already rushing forward, bayonets lowered, with wild cries of... 'Faugh a Ballagh!'

It was at this point in the battle that the Eagle was captured. Apparently Ensign Edward Keogh made the emblem of the 8th Regiment his target, and, enlisting the aid of Patrick Masterson, one of his Sergeants in the Grenadier Company, pushed his way towards it. Eventually grasping hold of it, he was killed; Masterson, stabbing the French standard bearer with his pike, gripped the staff of the Eagle and clung on to it until the end of the battle. Masterson was subsequently commissioned, and the Prince Regent granted the title of The Prince of Wales's Own Irish Regiment to the 87th

The battle lasted about an hour and a half, in contrast to the day and a half of Talavera. Oman described it as 'the crowning exploit of Graham's life... a wonderful instance of the triumph of a quick eye, and a sudden resolute blow over long odds.' It is also of interest to note that some of the main French protagonists of that earlier fight (Victor, Ruffin and Leval) were also at Barrosa, and of these perhaps General Francois Amable, Count Ruffin was the most unfortunate. He was mortally wounded and taken prisoner at Barrosa, dying on board HMS *Gorgon* off Plymouth on 15 May 1811.

Once again there is controversy about the number of men present and the casualty figures. Oman put the total strength of the 2/87th at 696 all ranks. Cunliffe said that it was 722. My own count of the Other Ranks mustered on 24 February 1811, only nine days before the battle, came to 782, but the monthly return<sup>14</sup> for 25 February 1811 taken at Tarrifa recorded the number of Other Ranks present and fit for duty as 666, with 32 officers — near enough to Oman's figures.

The variation in the figures recorded for fatal casualties is even more problematical. Oman and Cunliffe, following the figure given by Graham in his despatch of 10 March, and published in the *London Gazette* on 25 March, recorded one officer and 44 men killed. However, the casualty return of the 2/87th<sup>15</sup> made out on 24 March, recorded only 30 men killed on 5 March, and the monthly return for 25 March 1811 recorded. Under 'Changes since the previous return', three Sergeants, one Drummer and 33 Privates dead

(which would include men who died of wounds). The main reason for this discrepancy is probably the same as for Talavera: information compiled in the understandably confused 24 hours after the event was incorrect, and should have been revised later. Unfortunately, this revision seems not to have taken place in print, and the original figures have acquired the texture of tablets of stone over the years.

Finally, we can say a few words about the respective fates of our three heroes. Richard Walsh was the only one to be wounded at Barrosa (in the right leg), but this did not stop him going on to fight with the battalion at Vittoria, in the Pyrenees, on the Nive and the Nivelle, and at Orthes, where he was wounded yet again, this time in the left leg. He was discharged on 16 August 1815, and on the reverse of his pension paper his battalion commander, Hugh Gough, wrote: 'I beg earnestly to recommend him as a most deserving Non-Commissioned Officer'. Perhaps he was as successful in civilian life as he had been as a soldier before he died at Manchester on 21 July 1858.

Benjamin Brant continued in a military career for the duration of the Peninsular War, but took no more part in any actions for which a bar was authorised for the Military General Service medal. In fact he was not discharged until 15 May 1816, the cause being given as 'weak wrist'. He presumably went back to the West Midlands to look for work, as he died at Birmingham on 9 January 1855

Ralph Johnson was promoted Captain in the 64th Foot on 21 November 1811, and saw no further Peninsular service. He had to wait some 15 years for his Majority, again in the 64th Foot, which was dated 10 June 1826, but less than four years later he left the active list. PRO WO 31/640 contains his application for an unattached Lieutenant-Colonelcy, which was supported by his uncle, General Sir Henry Johnson in a letter dated Bath, 16 April 1829, and endorsed by a recommendation from his Commanding Officer in the 64th in a letter dated 9 September 1829: 'I have ever round him a most active and zealous officer in the discharge of the several duties of his profession and as such I beg leave to support his application with my strongest recommendation for the favourable consideration of the Commander-in-

Chief

WO 31/640 also contains intriguing correspondence on the investigation into Johnson's background. A letter dated 27 April 1829 from Lord Byng to Lord Fitzroy Somerset, says that the writer had asked Major-General Sir Thomas Arbuthnot to investigate Johnson's character while Arbuthnot was inspecting the 64th Regiment in Ireland. Arbuthnot's reply (in a letter dated Athlone, 4 May 1829) concluded that 'Major Johnson is one of the officers of the 64th Regiment who fought some American officers belonging to a frigate of that nation some years back on which occasion he conducted himself well and gained much credit...'

A letter to Lord Fitzroy Somerset from Byng (dated Dublin, 5 May 1829) highlighted this incident: 'The affair alluded to with some American officers at Gibraltar I have heard of. I did not know that Major Johnson was the particular officer mentioned. His conduct on that occasion as it was represented to me I consider highly creditable to him and to our profession...'

Thereafter it appears that Johnson wrote to the War Office (9 January 1837) asking whether he could be put back on full pay so that he could either return to active service, or retire. That request was granted, and there is another note in the file<sup>16</sup> to the effect that the vacant company in the Grenadier Guards would be filled by an officer from the Half Pay, viz the said Johnson. The note also seems to indicate that he was only 48 years old at the time, which would make him only 17 when he was commissioned Ensign in December 1806, and only<sup>17</sup> when he got his Lieutenancy. His date of death, is unfortunately, unknown. **MD**

#### Notes

- 1 Public Records Office ref WO 97/958
- 2 WO 12/462-3.
- 3 WO 12/11169
- 4 WO 12/9019
- 5 WO 12/11193
- 6 WO 97/966.
- 7 WO 31/218.
- 8 WO 31/241.
- 9 *The Royal Irish Fusiliers 1793-1968*, 2nd edn, OUP, 1970.
- 10 Vol II, Clarendon Press, 1903
- 11 Edward Arnold, 1913.
- 12 WO 12/920
- 13 *Years of Victory 1802-1812*, Collins, 1944.
- 14 *Peninsular War*, Vol IV, 1911.
- 15 WO 17/208
- 16 WO 25/2094
- 17 WO 31/756

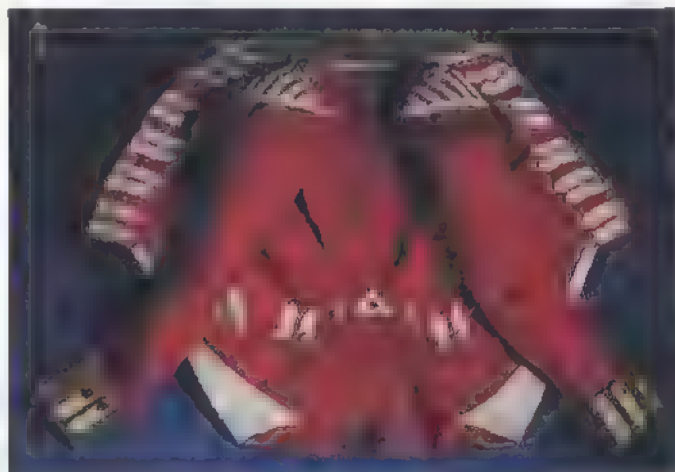




Another depiction of the scene when Sergeant Masterson captured the Eagle of the 8th at Barrosa- diorama modellers, take your pick  
Engraving by Sutherland after William Heath



**Left:** The Eagle of the 8th Line.  
An engraving, after Lieutenant  
Pym of the 87th

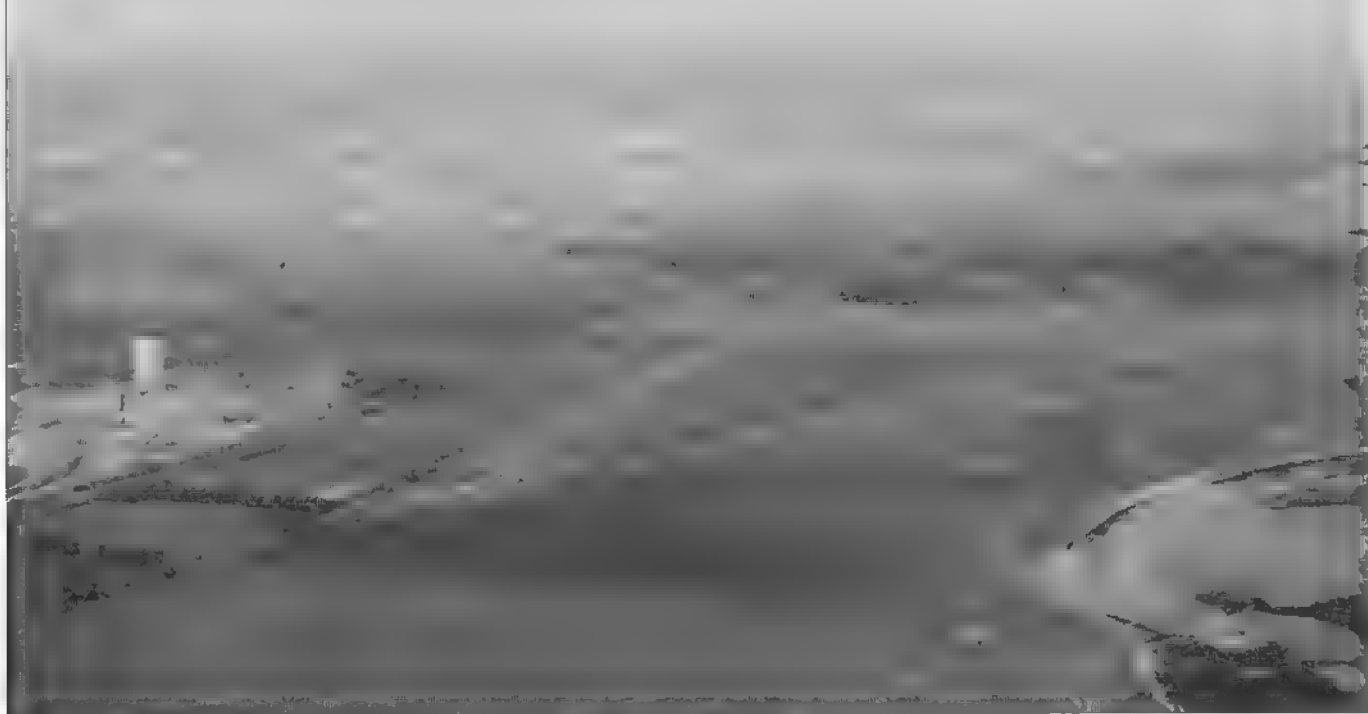


**Below:** Jacket and cuff detail  
of the 87th





# Battlefields of the English Civil Wars Today



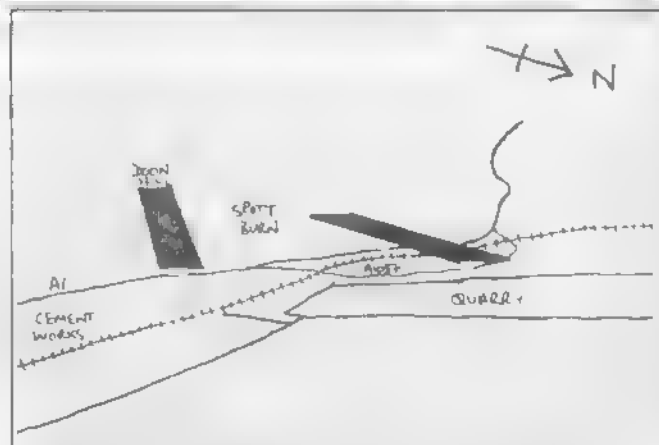
MIKE and JENNY McCORMACK

AN INTERNATIONAL flying competition — which they won — gave the McCormacks the opportunity to photograph several of the major English Civil War battlefields from the air.

## The battlefields of the English Civil War today

THE 350th ANNIVERSARY of the start of the English Civil Wars last year was marked by numerous events up and down the country. It also provided the theme for an entry into an international flying competition called 'Dawn to Dusk'. In the competition entrants have to nominate a subject, and then on a date of their choice, make a flight to demonstrate 'the most interesting use of an aero-

plane in a single day between dawn and dusk to future an original or praiseworthy objective? We set the objective for the entry as being 'To fly over and photograph the major battlefields of the English Civil Wars, to show that whilst some of the sites are largely unchanged, others have almost completely disappeared'. The aircraft used for the entry was a popular type of a light aircraft, a Piper Cherokee. It seats four people, cruises at 110 mph and



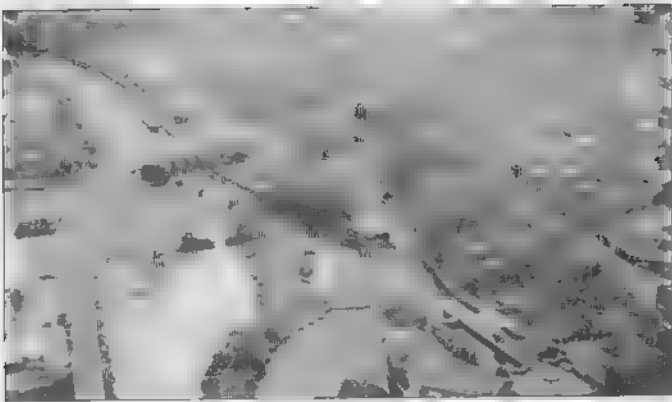
*Dunbar — the site of the battle from the north-east. Here, the Scots under David Leslie had an initial position on top of Doon Hill, strategically an excellent position. However, on the advice of his preachers, Leslie left the top of the hill and took up a position to the south (left) of Spott Burn, around which most of the fighting took place. The site is ruined by a massive cement works, which marks the position of the right-hand end of Leslie's forces in the battle*

Mike and Jenny McCormack with their Piper Cherokee Cruiser

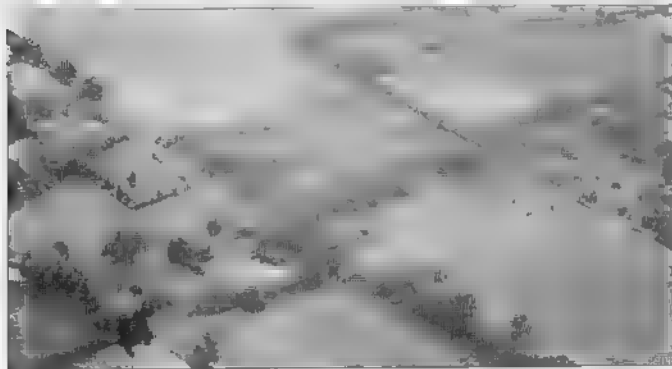


Dunbar was one of the later battles of the Civil Wars, taking place on 4 September 1650. The 22,000 Scottish supporters of King Charles II under David Leslie were defeated by Cromwell's 12,000 men. Over 3,000 Scots were killed at Dunbar, whilst a further 10,000 surrendered. The site of the battle is easy to determine although a cement works has been built where Cromwell's troops took up position at the foot of Doon Hill





Newark — the Castle. Following defeat at the battle of Naseby, King Charles took refuge in Newark Castle. After his capture by the Scots at nearby Southwell on 5 May 1646, Newark surrendered

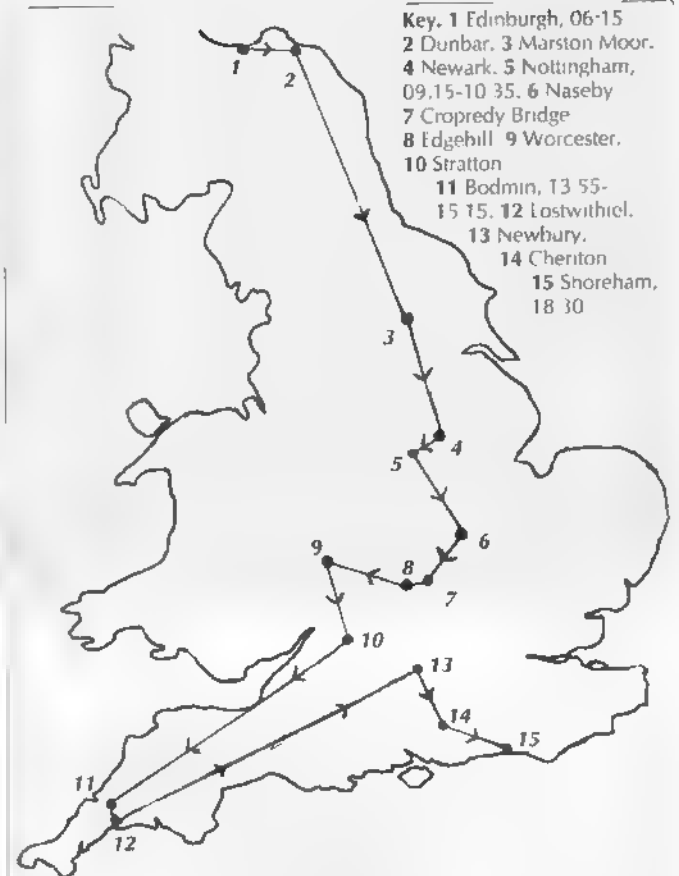
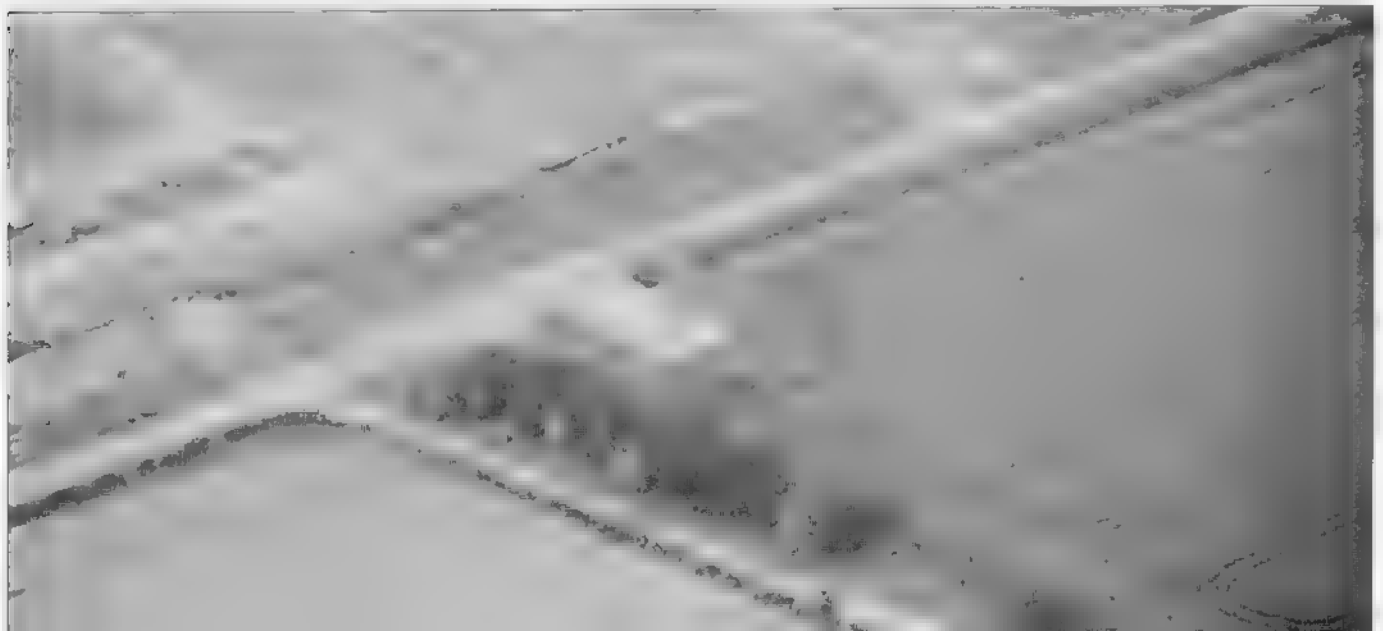


Newark — the Queen's Sconce. This is the best surviving earthwork and covers an area of about three acres. Originally the earthworks were surrounded by a dry ditch which would have had the added protection of palisades in the bottom such that they could not be destroyed by artillery bombardment.

**Newark** was the scene of three of the most concerted sieges during the wars. The first siege took place during 1643, the second during 1644, the final siege starting in late 1645 and continuing until the Royalist town finally surrendered to the Parliamentarians in May 1646. Today the town is the site of some of the best preserved earthwork fortifications dating from the Civil

Wars. The town's castle was a Royalist stronghold, being subsequently slighted by the Parliamentarians particularly severely; today only the west wall remains. To the west of the town is the Queen's Sconce — a four-sided earthwork fortification built by the Royalists, whilst to the south-west and the north-east of the town traces remain of two other fortifications guarding routes into and out of Newark.

Marston Moor — the Monument erected by the Cromwell Association in commemoration of the 4 000 Royalists and 300 Parliamentarians estimated to have been killed here.



Above: Map of the McCormacks' route

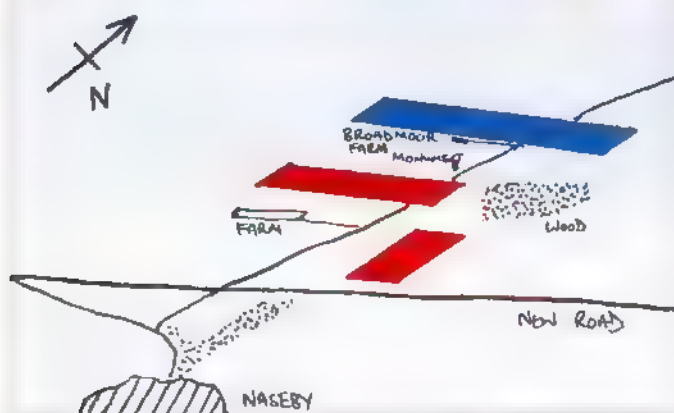
has a range of around 400 miles.

Research indicated that during the Civil Wars there had been numerous battles and sieges up and down the country. Therefore the first step was to identify which were the main battlefields, and then develop a route to visit them all in a day. We also tried to arrange for refuelling stops to be at airfields near towns with strong Civil War connections.

Our research identified the battlefields at Edgehill, Stratton, Newbury, Newark, Cheriton, Cropredy Bridge, Marston

**Marston Moor** was the biggest battle of The Civil Wars. It was fought when Royalist Prince Rupert advanced on York to relieve the city which was under siege by Lord Fairfax. Initially the fighting went well for the Royalists, but the tables gradually turned and the day became a triumph for the Parliamentarians under Fairfax and Cromwell. An estimated 4,300 died in the fighting. The scene of the fighting at Marston Moor is probably little changed since 2 July 1644, the countryside in the area being flat and relatively featureless.





Naseby — the site of the battle from the south-east. The battle was fought just north of the village. The majority of the fighting took place in the slight dip between the two farms on the far side of the road running northwards from Naseby. The battlefield has been visually changed since 1645 by the division of the land into a patchwork of enclosed fields.

Naseby was one of the really interesting sites from our point of view. On 14 June 1645 the Royalists under the King suffered a crushing defeat by the Parliamentarians under Fairfax and Cromwell. Situated just north of the village of Naseby, today the battlefield is the site of major roadworks as a new link road is being pushed through the countryside. This construction was the subject of concerted objection to try to get the route to avoid a part of our national heritage, but to no avail

Cropredy Bridge — the site of the battle from the south west. This site has been complicated by the later building of the Oxford Canal the bridge spanning it and the railway line. The River Cherwell was probably much wider before the canal was constructed. The village of Cropredy has grown since 1644 but otherwise the countryside around it is probably little changed. The Earl of Cleveland's attack on Lieutenant General John Middleton's guns and infantry would have been from right to left across the fields just beyond the tree-lined road running horizontally across the picture



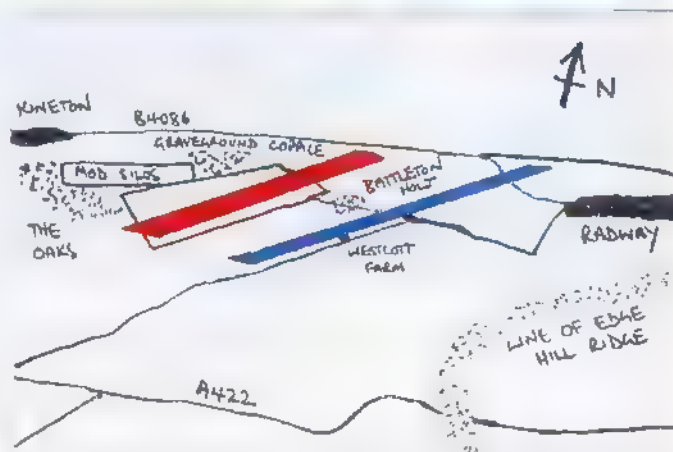


Edgehill — the site of the battle from the south-west. Today Edgehill itself is heavily wooded, but at the time of the battle there was only a single line of trees on the ridge. The Royalist positions ran roughly parallel to and on the far side of the lane running from the A422 to Radway. The Parliamentarians for their part were lined up across the site of today's MoD silos.

Moor, Lostwithiel, Naseby, Dunbar and Worcester as being the ones we wanted to photograph. This list provided some interesting challenges. The site of Dunbar, for example, is today almost covered by a cement works. Both sites at Newbury are largely built over with housing estates. The greater part of the site of Edgehill is Ministry of Defence

land to which access is normally closed. Naseby has been particularly controversial recently as it is currently disappearing under motorway construction.

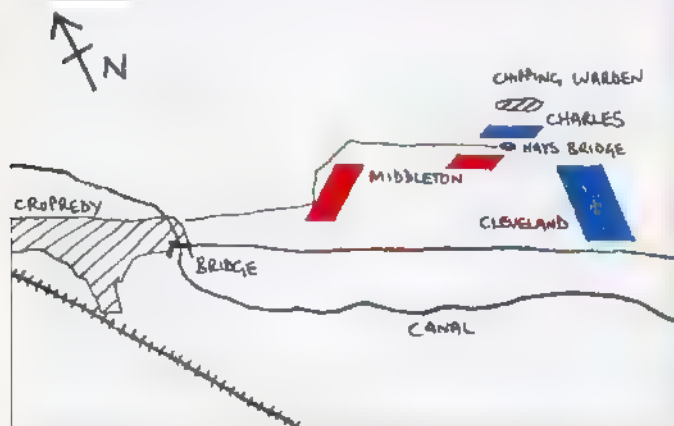
Having chosen the battlefields, we then had to work out how to cover them all in a day, bearing in mind that they stretched from the Scotland to Cornwall. We came up with a route which started in



Cropredy Bridge is one of the sites where significant change will have taken place over the years. Today's bridge over the River Cherwell was built on the site of the original bridge, whilst both the Oxford Canal and the railway have been built since the battle to complicate matters. The opposing armies clashed north of Banbury at Cropredy when the Parlia-

mentarians had been moving northwards to the west of the river, whilst the Royalists had been moving in a similar direction to its east. Waller attempted to surround the King by advancing simultaneously over both Cropredy Bridge and a ford to the south of Cropredy. The effort was soundly rebuffed, Cropredy Bridge being a clear victory for the King.

Cropredy Bridge — the bridge and the church. Today's Cropredy Bridge was built in Victorian times but stands on the same spot as the bridge of 1644. The 14th century church contains a lectern in the form of an eagle. As fighting broke out, the residents threw the lectern into the river. However, they forgot the exact spot where they had thrown it and years were to elapse before it was finally recovered from the mud.



Edgehill was the first large-scale action of the Civil Wars, King Charles I and around 13,000 men facing Lord Essex and around 12,000 men. There was no conclusive 'winner' at Edgehill, the fighting petering out as darkness fell. Edgehill was one of the locations of particular interest from our point of view. This was because today the majority of the site is owned

by the Ministry of Defence and as such is closed to public access. However, there are no rules to prevent flying over it, so we were able to photograph the site without difficulty. The Royalist positions stretched south-west from the Radway to Kineton road, the Parliamentarians taking up a parallel position further along the road towards Kineton.





Worcester was the scene of the first and last action in the wars. On 23 September 1642, just a month after the king raised his standard at Nottingham, Royalist Prince Rupert routed the Earl of Essex which King Charles I raised his standard and declared war on Parliament on 22 August 1642. Taking off again at 10.35am, we passed over Naseby, Cropredy Bridge, Edgely, Worcester and Stratton to land at Bodmin at 1.55pm. Bodmin was strongly Royalist though out the Civil Wars; to make the connection we were met by a group from the English Civil War Society in period costume. Their presence on the airfield, complete with pikes, caused something of a stir. We left 3.15pm. Our route started by

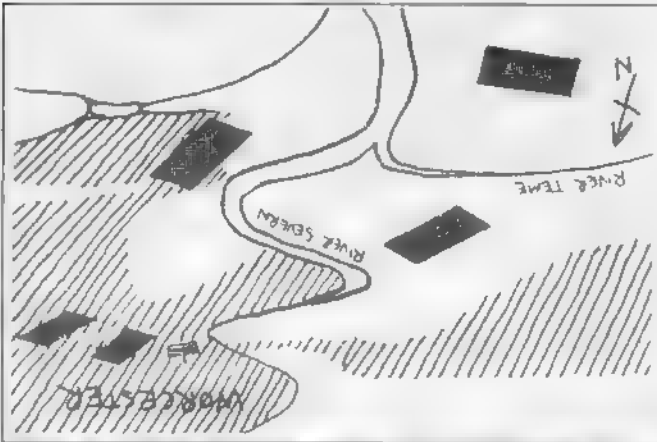
Edinburgh at 6.15am, passing over Dunbar, Marston Moor and Newark to land at Nottingham at 9.15am. a refuelling stop perfectly because it was the town in which King Charles I raised his standard and declared war on Parliament on 22 August 1642. Taking off again at 10.35am, we passed over Naseby, Cropredy Bridge, Edgely, Worcester and Stratton to land at Bodmin at 1.55pm. Bodmin was strongly Royalist though out the Civil Wars; to make the connection we were met by a group from the English Civil War Society in period costume. Their presence on the airfield, complete with pikes, caused something of a stir. We left 3.15pm. Our route started by

passing over Restormel Castle and Castle Dore, both sites associated with the action around Lostwithiel in September 1644. The route continued to Newbury, taking in the two battlefields near the town, then Cheriton, landing at Shoreham Airport in Sussex at 6.30pm. Shoreham was the ideal point to end the flight, being the port from which King Charles II escaped to France in 1651. The aircraft proved to be an ideal way of seeing the tie of the battlefields. Contrary to popular belief, one can go almost anywhere in a light aircraft, the only restrictions existing around major airports. We flew the majority of the route at a relatively low level (around 1,500 feet), circling over each battlefield to take pictures.

Finally, we landed at Shoreham Airport in Sussex at 6.30pm after covering 740 miles in 9 hours 35 minutes — quite an undertaking in a small light aircraft. Shoreham was, of course, particularly appropriate, being the port from which King Charles II fled to France after defeat at Worcester. The result? We won the competition outright against competition from as far away as Australia and as against competition from the RAF. For that we would like to thank the English Civil War Society for their help at every stage of the effort — especially the reception committee at Bodmin.

**Note:** We shall be printing some more of Mike and Jenny McCormack's photographs in next month's issue.

Worcester — the site of the battle from the south Worcester has expanded enormously since 1651, yet the open land south of the city centre near the confluence of the Rivers Tems and Severn has probably changed very little. In 1651 the Scots under Charles II held the land between the two rivers (centre of photo), while Charles himself held the area around the cathedral. The Parliamentarians attacked the Scots over their bridge of boats, and the king by advancing along the east (right) bank of the River Severn. Worcester was the first city to declare for the king and the last to surrender at the end of the wars





# BOOK REVIEWS

**With Eagles to Glory: Napoleon and his German Allies in the 1809 Campaign** by John H. Gill. Greenhill; ISBNB 1-85367-130-4; 534pp; over 80 mono maps & diagrams; appendices, chronology, glossary, bibliography & index; £30.00

This monumental new study of the 1809 campaign took three years of research in Germany by US Army Major John Gill, who deserves applause for the depth of information he has unearthed. Napoleonic aficionados will be particularly pleased with the vast amount of new information on the troops of the Confederation of the Rhine and the part they played in key battles such as Aspern and Wagram. Without them, the author argues convincingly, Napoleon could not have won this campaign, and he examines the characteristics as well as the organisation of each national contingent in minute detail. An essential addition to every Napoleonic library.

**England in the Seven Years' War: Vol I 1756-59; Vol II 1759-65** by Julian S. Corbett. Greenhill, Vol I ISBN 1-85367-133-9; 476pp; Vol II ISBN 1-85367-134-7; 407pp; appendices & bibliography; £25.00 per volume.

Corbett's seminal study of British maritime power and strategy in the 18th century, long out of print, is now available again with a new introduction by Christopher Duffy. First published in 1907, it was regarded as controversial at the time — as, indeed, were many of Corbett's ideas on naval strategy, since he regarded fleet actions as subordinate to land strategy, which did not go down well with their Lordships. Despite the passage of time, his book is still fresh, carefully thought out with academic precision, and should be read by anyone with an interest in 18th century naval warfare.

**Derbyshire in the Civil War** by Brian Stone. Scarthin Books; ISBN 0-907758-58-4; 155pp; mono illu.; appendices, bibliography & index; £14.95.

Beginning with a description of Derbyshire life in the 17th century, this book goes on to relate the battles and other exploits in which Derbyshire men (and women) took part. The author gives a laudably clear account of events and quotes extensively from individual memoirs, giving the reader a vivid sense of historical reality. Reproduction of the line and tone illustrations, regrettably, poor, but overall, this does not detract from an magnificently conceived book which deserves to sell well.

**Die kurfuerstlich-saechsische Armee um 1791** Reprint of 200 coloured engravings by Fr.

John. Ch. Reinhold dated 1791 to 1806. 242pp, 200 col illu., descriptive text in German, medium format, hardbound. Available from: Peter Hofschroer, PO Box 1427, W-5414 Vallendar, Germany. Price GBP29.95 (inc P&P surface mail).

Most primary sources of Napoleonic uniforms are either in distant libraries or in private collections and because of this, access to them is generally very limited. Any publisher that makes such material available to a wider audience deserves praise and support.

This is a collection of prints produced in Dresden during the Napoleonic Wars and is one of the finest sources available on the Saxon Army of this period and unlike so many such sources, is of appreciable artistic merit. The 200 illustrations, reproduced in full colour, show a variety of interesting details of the Saxon Army of this time. The Prince Elector is pictured in a cuirassier uniform, the background of the plates show details such as castles and forts, the men are shown practising their drill, detailed drawings of artillery pieces and the associated wagons are included. A plan of how a cavalry regiment pitched its tents is another feature. All of this contemporary information is enhanced by a commentary from Reinhold Muller and Wolfgang Rother, themselves both accredited experts on the subject.

All in all, especially when considering the current prices of art books containing so much colour, this work is a bargain.

**Die Uniformierung** by Klaus-Peter Merta. 208pp, 150 colour and mono illustrations, German text, medium format, hardbound. Price GBP29.95. Available from Peter Hofschroer, PO Box 1427, W-5414 Vallendar, Germany.

This second volume covers uniforms of the Prussian Army to 1806. An extensive part of the collection of the former Royal Prussian Arsenal is included in this work, much of it in full colour. Items of clothing and equipment such as neckstocks, cartridge boxes, etc., are included. The greatest boon in this work is that every page the official pattern book is included in full colour. This book is simply what uniform buffs dream of.

Thoroughly recommended. Volume 3, covering the organisation and tactics of the army, is due later this year.

**Das Heerwesen in Brandenburg und Preussen 1640 bis 1806.** A series of three volumes covering the Brandenburg-Prussian Army from 1640 to 1806. So far, two

volumes have been published. **Die Bewaffnung** by Heinrich Moller. 240pp, 165 col & mono illu., medium format, German text, hardbound. Price GBP29.95 (inc P&P surface mail). Available from: Peter Hofschroer, PO Box 1427, W-5414 Vallendar, Germany.

This series is based on the exhibits contained in the former Royal Prussian Arsenal in Berlin. Volume one covers weaponry. Backed up by high quality photographic work on firearms, swords, pikepoles and cannon, this splendid work has chapters on the methods of weapon manufacture, infantry arms, cavalry arms including cuirassier armour and artillery equipments. There is also a section on manufacturers' marks which is of great use to the collector.

This is a book that every weapon collector must have. The standard of the photograph and the quality of the production of this work is first class.

**Osprey Elite series: all 64pp, approx 50 mono illu., 12 colour plates; £7.99**

**E42: The Persian Army 560-330BC** by Nick Sekunda, plates by Simon Chew

Dr Sekunda contributed a marvelous Elite title on the Ancient Greek armies some years ago, so expectations were high for this companion book. The treatment follows that in the Greek title interspersed throughout the general text rather than isolated at the end, are very full, discursive plates commentaries. Dr Sekunda's expertise is very impressive and he explains his reconstructions with academic care. Points on organisation, tactics, weaponry, etc., are raised at logical stages throughout the densely integrated text. The illustrations combine the usual sculptural, archaeological, coin, vase etc. evidence. The plates glow with the Persian palette of purples, yellows, reds and blues, and offer a lot of information. This reviewer did not like the treatment, however, it is deliberately flat and two-dimensional, apeing the appearance of the ancient friezes from which the evidence is extracted for each figure. This is academically respectable, but not attractive.

**E43: Vietnam Marines 1965-73** by Charles D. Melson, plates by Paul Hannon.

This covers the deployment, organisation, weapons, equipment, and — briefly — history of not only the USMC in Vietnam but also the South Vietnamese and South Korean Marines. The author is a USMC veteran of that war, and writes with great authority (and with feeling, especially about

rations). This is a thorough detailed, and useful book solidly in the mainstream tradition of the Osprey series. The photographs are plentiful and interesting (though given the known quality of US government prints, the reviewer suspects, not for the first time that Osprey have reduced their printing specification on in some way reproduction is worryingly dark in most cases). The plates are attractive, the only quibble, from one addicted to the sharpness of Ron Voisard's paintings in this series, is the softness of treatment of some of the camouflage clothing, which makes it hard to distinguish details. Nevertheless recommended, this is a good read, full of first hand information. JS

**US Marine Corps Uniforms and Equipment in World War 2** by Jim Moran; Windrow & Greene; 142pp; approx 300 b/w photos, 28 colour photos; £25.00

It is extraordinary that there has never before been a detailed reference book published on this subject, and we can well understand that — as we hear — the curators at the Marine museums at Quantico and the Washington Navy Yard (who helped the author a great deal during its preparation) are eagerly awaiting this book, to enable them to answer the questions of enthusiast visitors more easily. It was worth waiting for: it is handsomely produced, clearly organised and written, and very well illustrated. The author is himself a collector of note and a part-time dealer; his occasional stands at UK military fairs have always offered a mouth-watering selection of exactly identified Marine memorabilia.

The book is divided into chapters on the dress and kit in use by US Marine infantry at the outbreak of war, the 'sage green' uniforms, and the web equipment, produced during 1942-45, the appearance and evolution of the surprisingly complex series of camouflage uniforms, through the brief life of the Raider and Paramarine units and thereafter; insignia, miscellaneous small kit, and finally the USMC Women's Reserve. Each chapter has a concise descriptive text, a selection of wartime photos of the items in use, and a selection of studio close-ups of the items, mostly 'cut-out' against white and sharply reproduced to a good size. Captions are brief but very specific. We imagine collectors will bless the day Mr Moran was born. It is not a cheap book, but with well over 300 photos — including eight pages of full colour shots of assembled uniforms worn by live models — and with a page size of 12 by 8 inches, it seems good value by today's standards, the quality of the paper and printing are first class. A long awaited reference, highly recommended. JS



# British Infantry Musicians in the 18th Century

PHILIP HAYTHORNTHWAITE and  
GERRY EMBLETON

THE PRACTICE OF distinguishing drummers and fifers by outfitting them, often at great expense, in heavily laced uniforms of reversed regimental colours lasted from the late 17th to the early 19th century. This month we examine military bands of the period.

ALTHOUGH regimental bands existed in the 17th century — the Horse Grenadier Guards had 'hoboyes' in 1678 — most originated in the later 18th century, and were used not only for parade but even for playing in action to boost morale: when the 28th came under fire at Geldermalsen (1795) Lord Cathcart is said to have called, 'Where is your band, sir?' Now is the time for it to play'. Bands were generally paid for by a regiment's officers (eg, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Ross of the 39th was billed for 16/- as his share of band expenses for June-October 1780<sup>2</sup>), the cost of which could

be enormous: in 1746 the 1st Guards' band expenses exceeded the sum allowed by d650/18/- per annum, and their expenditure on band clothing in 1764-65 was d344/9/-. The 59th paid eight guineas for a clarinet in August 1777, approximately the cost of making between 60 and 70 uniforms for privates.

It was common to employ professional musicians as bandsmen, very often foreigners and many not properly enlisted: only two of the 29th's musicians in 1788 were enrolled as soldiers, for example, and the absence of the 30th's band, remarked upon



when the regiment was in the West Indies in 1791, was perhaps due to the reluctance of professional musicians to serve in so lethal a climate. So many foreign musicians were employed that sometimes they were enlisted *en masse*: the 2nd Guards hired their band in Hanover in 1785, all of whom were attested as soldiers; in

*The importance of a good regimental band is exemplified in this cartoon by James Gillray, 'John Bull Going to the Wars', published June 1793.*

1804 Major-General Alexander Mackenzie-Fraser received permission to enlist as the band of the 2nd Battalion of his 78th Foot German prisoners-of-war he had found aboard the prison-hulk HMS *Sultan*, and in 1805 General Hon Chapple Norton was told that he could employ Swiss, Germans and Italians as the band of his 56th, but no Frenchmen.

The earliest bands (the 3rd Foot had one by 1754, one of the first) usually comprise about eight performers: two oboes, two clarionets, two bassoons and two horns; the 2nd Guards in 1785 had such an assembly, plus two extra clarionets, a trumpet and a serpent. The largest bands recorded in the 18th century would appear to include the 29th in 1774 (19 players), 70th 1779 (22) and 21st 1798 (25: unusually, this comprised five sergeants, ten corporals, five drummers and five privates). Some Inspection Returns mention the employment of very young musicians, such as the four little boys among the 12th's twelve bandsmen in 1792, the very young band of the 44th in 1787, the 27th in 1792 (17 drums and fifes, ten musicians, six so young as to be unserviceable) and the 28th in the same year (15 drums and fifes, 11

*A royal bandmaster wearing 'state dress' of the style used by the Foot Guards and state trumpeters; aquatint by William Miller, published 1805.*





An example of oriental dress as worn by coloured bandsmen in some regiments a Negro cavalry musician wearing a braided jacket with elaborately-laced sleeves, and an oriental crescent badge on the head dress. ('The Recruit', a mezzotint by C. Turner after John Eckstein, published January 1803)



musicians, five young). Some regiments were slow in forming bands: in 1766 the 12th had to pay six guineas to hire the 35th's band to play during a review, and the 19th's band was reported as newly-formed in 1774

Band uniforms were generally even more elaborate than those of the drummers, and hats rather than caps were usual: the 25th's band, for example, changed from caps in 1774 to hats with red feathers in 1777. White coats were quite common (the 37th's band in 1774, for example, wore white with scarlet facings, white breeches and waistcoats, and hats), the price in several recorded cases equating with that of sergeants' uniforms; indeed, supplies to the 49th in 1781 apparently included sergeants' hats for the band, plus 128 'brandenbourgs' (tasselled lace loops), the latter a common feature of band uniform.

By the 1780s a new fashion was having oriental or 'Turkish' instruments (cymbals, tambourine, kettledrums, etc), although some of these were in use earlier: the 22nd bought cymbals as early as March

1767 and the 25th's drum-major played the cymbals in 1777. It became highly fashionable to employ Negroes as 'original' instrumentalists, a

practice which lasted well into the 19th century, resulting in outlandish 'Turkish' costume and considerable expense. For example, the 2nd Guards

employed three, later four Negro musicians, one of whom played a tambourine bought for d8/5/- in February 1802; in August 1804 d24/15/2d was paid for silver collars for these men, and in February 1808 d55 for turbans; in March 1810 the 3rd Guards spent d6/10/- on red pantaloons for their Negro musicians. Line regiments and even militia added such musicians to their bands: the 6th paid d2/7/5d for a hat for their tambourine-beater in 1787, while Sir William Young's drawings of the Buckinghamshire Militia band in 1793<sup>3</sup> depict typical exotic costume with two distinct styles of head-dress: a cylindrical cap with silver plate worn by the tambourine-beater, and a beaded turban by the cymbalist.

The extent of decoration of such uniforms is exemplified by a late (1834) description of the 29th's Negroes who played the



The band as an aid to a recruiting-party: a recruiting scene by Robert Dighton, 1781. The drum belt apparently with fleur-de-lys lace, is similar to that used by Foot Guards



Bandsmen usually accompanied their regiments on campaign. This scene of infantry on the march by Thomas Rowlandson shows what is presumably the band's bass drummer, who appears to be distinguished by cords on his shako and a light-bladed sword. A bass drum was a cumbersome burden; the 20th Foot smashed theirs on the retreat to Corunna due to the difficulty of carrying it, and to prevent it falling into enemy hands

bass drum, kettle-drum and tambourine in the band:

'A muslin turban with a silver crescent in front, surmounted by a scarlet hackle feather 12 inches long, with silver cord and tassels, entwined around the turban. A silver-plated stock for the neck which opened with clasps and fastened behind. Yellow cloth jacket, hussar fashion, trimmed with black fur on collar and cuffs, the breast was embroidered with black silk cord, and three rows of silver buttons in front. The jacket was worn open. The waistcoat was of white cloth embroidered with crimson silk cord, and had a row of silver buttons down the front. A yellow and crimson silk sash round the waist. They also wore Turkish scimitars, brass scabbards with sling waist belts. The pantaloons were scarlet with a broad silver stripe on the outside seams, and fitted tight at the knee. Yellow Hessian boots with large black silk tassels in front'

The 29th was unusual in their tradition of using Negroes as ordinary drummers, not just with the band; this originated in 1759 when Admiral Boscawen acquired ten West Indians at the

surrender of Guadeloupe and brought them home as a present for his brother, Hon George Boscawen, colonel of the 29th. The practice only ended with the death of the last of the 29th's Negro drummers in 1843, but appears not to have been universally popular: one such drummer was reported to have been set upon by a party of soldiers in a 'house of bad fame' in Aberdeen, and murdered'.

Outlandish costumes were not restricted to Negro musicians: in 1805 the Cheshire Militia's bass drummer wore a red-braided white dolman and breeches, sleeveless red pelisse, red mirliton cap with black plume, and (apparently) a false white beard'. The band of the 2nd Battalion 35th, circa 1810 wore an orange, hussar-braided dolman with white and orange-tufted wings, half-sleeves and red collar, over a red sleeved waistcoat with orange cuffs, white breeches with red thigh-knots, a 'stovepipe' shako with red plume and black cords, and a mameluke sabre on a black waistbelt

The fashion for white band uniform lasted well into the mid-Victorian period, but 'reversed colours' as such were ended officially before the end of the Napoleonic Wars. On 25 September 1811 the Prince Regent approved a submission to the effect, 'That in consequence of the nature of the duties to which Trumpeters and Buglers are unavoidably exposed on service, and the inconvenience attendant upon their loss in action, which is ascribed to the market difference of their dress, their clothing may be of the same colour

as that worn by their respective regiments; and that the distinction which is necessary to preserve between them and the Private may be pointed out by the lace'.

Although the above wording ('may') still left room for colonels' discretion, it was confirmed in 1812 (General Order 1 July: 'the clothing of the Trumpeters and Buglers of Regiments shall in future be of the same colour as that of Privates of the Regiment'), but there is evidence that 'reversed colours' lingered for some little time, and units still retained their distinctive headdress. For example, when the North

Hampshire Militia ordered their 1812-pattern shako in early 1812, 'The feathers for the Band are to be white with black tips, and not very long... Fronts, musical devices. The Drummers Caps with the drum ornament behind'; the richness of the ornamentation (quite typical) may be gauged from the fact that whereas a shako for drummers and rank-and-file cost 8s.2d, musicians' caps cost 22/-, and that for the 'music master', with 'silver lines and tassels, plated trophy and cockade, spray, and cover' cost £2/15/-.<sup>8</sup>

**M**

#### Notes

1. *Memoir and Correspondence of the late Captain Arthur Stormont Murray*, Sir H. Murray, 1859, p51.
2. *Cox & Co, Army Agents*, Rev P Sumner, SAHR XVII (1938), p148
3. *The Uniforms of the Bucks Militia, 1793*, Rev P. Sumner SAHR XVIII (1939), pp63-66; unexpectedly, although the drum-major wears reversed colours, the drummer is shown with a red coat with yellow facings and indented cuffs, like the bandmen, though with a cap instead of a hat
4. *History of Thos. Farrington's Regiment*, subsequently designated *The 29th (Worcestershire) Foot*,

*Very distinctive and uniforms were worn into the middle of the 19th century; this lithograph of a piper and white-jacketed bandsman of the 93rd Highlanders after B Clayton was published in 1854.*







1694 to 1891, Major H. Everard, Worcester 1891, p375

5. *Morning Chronicle*, 10 September 1807

6. Illustrated most recently in *The Drum*, H. Barty-King, London 1988

7. *Records of the Infantry Militia Battalions of the County of Southampton...*, Colonel G.H. Loyd-Vernev & Lieutenant-Colonel J.M.F. Hunt, London 1894, p113

8. *ibid*, p122

#### References

In addition to the sources mentioned in notes, recommended titles include *A History of the Uniforms of the British Army*, C.C.P. Lawson, London 1940-67, which includes many copies of contemporary illustrations; and *British Military Uniforms 1768-96*, H. Stachan, London 1975, an invaluable compilation of primary documentary and illustrated material. *The Drum*, H. Barty-King, London 1988, is a useful history of that instrument, primarily in British military service; and an important listing of 18th century military bands is given in *Our Regimental Bands*, Dr H.G. Farmer, SAHR XL.I (1964), pp157-59. The 1751 Warrant is reproduced in *Origin and Services of the Coldstream Guards*, D. MacKinnon, London 1833, II, pp346-55, in Lawson II (above), and in part in Sumner's *Army Inspection Returns* (above), the 1768 Warrant in Lawson I.I and Stachan (above)

**Above:** Drum-major, pioneer and musicians: aquatint by I.C. Stadler from Charles Hamilton Smith's *Costume of the Army of the British Empire*, published March 1815

Despite the date of publication, this print is coloured (to represent the 66th?) with green coats with red facings for all except the pioneer, perhaps evidence of the continuing use of 'reversed colours' for bands if not for company musicians.

**Above right:** French prints of troops seen during the occupation of France in 1815 are often not of great accuracy, but the depiction of musicians obviously in 'reversed colours' seems to confirm their continuing use among bandsmen, as in this view of a Highland musician and sergeant

**Right:** Exotic costumes for musicians continued in use even after the Napoleonic Wars: this lithograph by E. Hull of the drum-major and band of the 87th Foot published September 1828, shows them all wearing hussar-style fur busbies.





# Royal Canadian Beach Commando 'W'

ERIC FINLEY and ED STOREY

AS THEY completed intensive training and exercises on the south coast, Royal Canadian Beach Commando 'W' chafed at the bit while D-Day came and went and they still had not been assigned a role. But that was soon to change...

LIMITED TRAINING facilities at or close to HMS *Mastodon* resulted in many 'outside' opportunities being seized upon in order to prepare the unit for what was obviously not far ahead, and also to complement the otherwise monotonous physical regime and occasional leave.

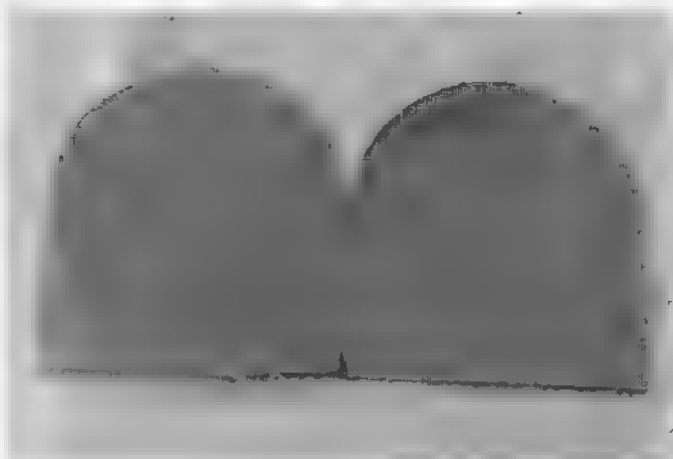
Over the ensuing six weeks from 16 February 1944, both in groups and/or as individuals, ratings and officers alike attended a wide variety of courses such as land mines, booby traps, bomb detection and disposal, underwater beach obstacles, landing craft recovery, and aircraft recognition. Afterwards demonstration sessions would be held for the

benefit of those who had remained at HMS *Mastodon*.

A large percentage of 'W' members finally did gain some practical beach experience around this period when GJ3 arranged for most of the officers and some 30 ratings to observe certain large scale exercises — 'Gold Braid', 'Trousers' and 'Prank'.

Towards the end of March, 'W' Commando learned that its present accommodation was required for operational Landing Craft Infantry (Large) LCIL(L) flotilla crews and staff. About this same time, SO(CO) advised his superior, SNCO(L).

Senior Canadian Naval Officer, London — that while 'W' was definitely the spare



*A pair of unissued British-manufactured, printed canvas Combined Operations badges as would have been issued to RCN Beach Commando 'W' (Ed Storey Collection.)*

Commando in Force J and as such would not take part in any main assault, 'it is most likely, however, that the party will be required for a diversionary assault such as Salerno or Anzio'. Early in April 'W' moved to HMS *Lizard* at Hove.

When, within two weeks, the whole matter of 'W's' role resurfaced, SNCO(L) apparently appealed to a higher Canadian authority. Finally, in mid-May, Force J was told to hold 'W' in immediate reserve and to ensure it received all possible training, including exercise 'Greengage' which was about to take place.

Meanwhile and as had been the case at Exbury, valuable opportunities for 'outside' training became available. Particularly useful as it subsequently turned out were vehicle handling courses run by the Canadian Army, as a result of which practically every 'W' member learned to operate a wide range of military vehicles. Noteworthy too was the experience gained by three officers who underwent a two-week, outdoor battle tactics course and by 70 ratings who took a week of infantry and street fighting instruction at Canadian Army training schools.

*April 1944. Jack Macbeth in front of the wardroom at HMS Lizard. This shows the various pieces of insignia quite well although the original print is murky. Note the RCN officer's cap badge, RCN shoulder boards on the BD tunic, shoulder straps, Canadian Volunteer Service Medal ribbon and, of most interest, a white lanyard and private-purchase wire versions of the CANADA and COMMANDO flash along with the Combined Operations Patch. (E G. Finley Collection.)*



Throughout this fortnight period, the bulk of the Commando bivouacked under canvas.

While much of the time spent at Hove was devoted to assembling, sorting, fitting and servicing operational stores and beach equipment, the PBM's May report indicated that very little training gear had thus far been obtained. So whenever beach drills were held, most often the operational gear would have to be utilised. Even at that, one finds frequent references in official military documents to the necessity for borrowing and scrounging from any source whatsoever.

A number of ratings in 'W' took advantage of the Royal Navy training staff and facilities to upgrade at HMS *Lizard*. After taking the special three-week course, ten ABs passed the Combined Operations Leading Seaman examination and one L/S similarly qualified as Petty Officer. Sanctioned by HMCS *Niobe*, this method of advancing ratings from within facilitated bringing 'W' more in line with authorised staffing classifications.

At the end of May, six 3-ton trucks and two single-deck buses transported 'W' Commando from Hove to Southampton (from where the convoy transferred for the ferry passage to Cowes on the Isle of Wight) and thence to HMS *Vectis* (Pines Camp). Within a week Force J's three RN Commandos ('L', 'P', and 'S') had landed on Juno Beach on D-Day, and soon after all 'W' personnel must have begun to



**Above left:**

22 April 1944. Lieutenant Eric Gault Finley RCNVR from Montreal, wearing a RCN Navy Blue officer's cap with private-purchase badge. Under his British-manufactured 1911 pattern BD tunic (note stamped brass buttons) he is wearing what appears to be a khaki drill shirt with Navy Blue tie. Also note that his rank insignia is on Navy Blue shoulder boards attached to the BD tunic straps. 'Skipper' Finley is co-author of this article. (Photo by Lieutenant G.A. Milne, RCNVR)

**Above:**

AB Russel Nelson from Ontario in April 1944. He is wearing the Mk II helmet. British-manufactured BD blouse with red on Navy Blue melton (CANADA and COMMANDO flashes with a canvas Combined Operations patch). His webbing is British '37 pattern. (Photo by Lieutenant G.A. Milne, RCNVR)

**Left:**

L/S George Yule served in corvettes on Atlantic convoy duties before joining 'W' Commando. He is wearing a Navy Blue RCN cap with HMCS cap tally as well as BD blouse and insignia as in the previous pictures. (Photo by Lieutenant G.A. Milne, RCNVR)

wonder whether, after so many months of intensive preparations, they would ever be called upon to carry out their mission.

A definite answer was continuously withheld over the next four weeks. The first major positive signal occurred on 13 June 1944 when RN Beach Signals Section Number 1 officially joined 'W'. As already mentioned, the Canadian War Cabinet Committee had authorised the RCN the previous September to allocate sufficient naval personnel for a Beach Commando and for a Beach Signal section. Since the RCN could not fulfil the latter part of this commitment, it fell to the RN to do so.

However, after a request shortly later from the London-based Canadian Naval Mission Overseas (CNMO) to have a Canadian LCI(L) transport 'W' to Normandy for experience was turned down by Allied Naval Commander Expeditionary Force (ANCFE), a sense of pessimism returned. This was augmented at the end of June by a signal from HMS Vectis sanctioning nine days leave to 'W' Commando.

Then suddenly out of the blue came the anxiously awaited and hoped for answer. On 4 July, less than 48 hours into their leave, 'W' received orders to proceed to Juno sector on 7 July in Canadian LCI(L) #298 'for a period of experience in beach duties'. Accordingly, urgent recalls were dispatched to those on leave. **MI**



IN APRIL 1992 the writer was lucky enough to be the guest of the 14th/20th King's Hussars at Munster in Germany, a poignant event in more ways than one because not only was there a regimental reunion with many 'old comrades' but this was likely to be the last time that the regiment would parade their guidon prior to amalgamation with the Royal Hussars — the 'Cherry pickers' of Balaclava fame. Special fascination was added by the fact that the Challenger tanks of the 14th/20th had recently seen action in the Gulf, and a happy by-product of the visit was a meeting with Commanding Officer, Colonel M.J.H. Vickery. Colonel Vickery kindly presented the uniform he wore in the Gulf to the regimental museum in Preston and it is this together with photographs taken and accounts written at the time which were the inspiration for this article.

Lieutenant Colonel 'Mike' Vickery has been a 'Hawk' for the whole of his career. He was first gazetted into the regiment as a subaltern in December 1968 and served as a troop leader in 'B' Squadron before promotion to Lieutenant and transfer to 'A' Squadron. In the mid-1970s he was with the Armoured Corps Gunnery School at Lulworth but by 1978 he was second in command of 'A' Squadron as a Captain.

Reaching the rank of Major in 1980, he finally came to command 'A' Squadron; but soon more and more postings took him away from the regiment to MoD Larkhill and the

*Challengers in the desert, camouflage nets have been pulled off revealing the network of metal rods which help disguise the shape of the tank and give the crew room to move about*

# Cavalry in the Gulf

STEPHEN BULL

THE AUTHOR was fortunate to obtain a first-hand account of 14th/20th King's Hussars operations in the Gulf War from the regiment's CO, Lieutenant-Colonel M.J.H. Vickery, and adds his own comments on officers' dress and the reasons for victory.



Royal Military College of Science. It would be fair to say that he had wide experience by the time he returned after four years away to take over as the commanding officer of the regiment in November 1989. Amongst other achievements he had completed the 'long armour course' and the Army Staff course. He had been awarded the regimental medal for his services 'to equitation', principally in leading the polo team to victory on many occasions, including beating the Life Guards in the inter-regimental competition. He had served in North America, Hong Kong, Singapore, Ulster and elsewhere, but the emphasis very definitely was on Main Battle Tanks in a potential defensive battle against a Soviet enemy in the temperate climate of

*'Corporal Saddam', the ass of 1st Troop 'B' Squadron, is ted biscuits by a Hussar wearing a ski mask. The original caption on another picture of 'Corporal Saddam' read, 'Chevrons were painted on anything that stood still long enough'. Apart from the allied chevron, the cloth also carries the Prussian eagle of the 14th/20th and the desert rat or gerboa*

Germany as he himself observed in the regimental journal.

Deployment to the Gulf at Christmas 1990 was therefore a considerable challenge; especially since the first phase plan for 'Operation Granby' had left many of the 14th/20th tanks stripped of parts and engines to provide enough spares for the units which had gone out

before. When the unit arrived at 'Black Adder Camp' in Saudi Arabia it became the main armoured component of Brigadier Hammerbeck's 4th Brigade. Since some personnel had already been sent to the Gulf to reinforce other units and part of the regiment remained in Berlin, the 14th/20th was itself supplemented by 'A' Squadron of the Life Guards and some men from the 4th Royal Tank Regiment. In action the 'battle-group' was to be supported directly by Queen's Company (1st Battalion the Grenadier Guards) engineers, artillerymen, cooks and medics.

As the 'cunning plan' unfolded 4th Brigade (which also included battalions of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and Royal Scots) was to advance on the eastern flank of the main Anglo-American attack and race 175 miles for the Basra road thereby cutting off Iraqi forces in Kuwait. The route of advance from the forming up point would take the brigade through a series of objectives code named after metals, 'Bronze', 'Copper' (south), 'Brass', 'Steel' and 'Tungsten', a brief pause at 'Varsity' and finally taking 'Cobalt' which was astride the Basra road.

## COLONEL VICKERY'S ACCOUNT

After crossing the start line at 7.30pm on 25 February the battlegroup advanced with 'A' and 'B' Squadrons forward to the left and right respectively and 'D' Squadron and the Queen's Company Grenadier Guards behind. The HQ was in the centre a little behind the lead squadrons. First contact came less than three hours later when Lieutenant Gimlette of 'B' Squadron spotted infantry and personnel carriers on the right





Colonel Vickery at his improvised command box desk in front of camouflaged vehicles. This time he wears a sleeveless grey woollen top with shoulder boards and yellow rank badges and an arab scarf tied cravat style.

flank. As 4th Troop moved to investigate they were illuminated by an infra-red searchlight and 'B' Squadron now became engaged against infantry transport vehicles and carriers, 11 of which were destroyed. In less than an hour enemy resistance ceased and the Queen's Company of the Grenadier Guards were ordered forward to take prisoners. They discovered that the battle group had overrun a transport unit and a signals company.<sup>4</sup>

By 3.15am the formation had re-formed and was driving towards the objective 'Copper (south)'; the Colonel's report picks up the story

'At 0415 hours 'B' Squadron's 4th Troop Corporal Adesile reported a large articulated lorry to his front. This was rapidly engaged and destroyed with one round APFSDS.<sup>5</sup> The truck must have been carrying ammunition judging by the fireball that ensued at about 0430 hours thermal contacts were definitely identified by both forward squadrons as T55s, we

Colonel Vickery's uniform complete with the 14th/20th Gulf 1991 'T-shirt'



were cleared to engage.

'We moved up into line and began to engage the enemy tanks from quite long ranges. My own gunner, Corporal Redgrave, scored a hit on a T55 turret showing only two feet above a berm at a range of 2,800m. Such was the accuracy of service ammunition. We engaged from the short halt, then moved forward 500m and engaged again. In this first engagement we destroyed about 15 tanks, some of which fired accurately enough for us to hear the crack of the rounds as they passed. We took no hits, however, and pressed on. There were more tanks in depth and a variety of troop carriers, mostly MTLB, and logistic vehicles including a fuel bowser which provided a good deal of light when hit with a HESH round'.<sup>6</sup>

After another leapfrog forward 'A' Squadron now reported tanks moving northward and engaged them, although in poor visibility some escaped. Queen's Company Grenadier

Guards again dismounted to mop up the Iraqis who had taken to their bunkers and found themselves accepting the surrender of the headquarters of the 52nd Iraqi Tank Brigade. The fight on objective 'Copper (south)' has since become known as the battle of 'Al Haniyah'.

Next on the agenda was objective 'Brass' which was believed to be held in brigade strength. Brigadier Hammerback allocated the 1st Battalion Royal Scots to the western end, the 14th/20th to the south and the 3rd Battalion Royal Regiment of Fusiliers to the east, attacking in turn, each fully supported by a divisional artillery barrage and US 155mm howitzers. Vickery continues

'I brought up 'B' Squadron to protect our eastern flank, and subsequently Recce Troops to keep watch to our north-east in case of counter-attack. 'A' and 'D' Squadrons destroyed some 21 tanks and seven MTLB on the objective while 'B' Squadron accounted for a further six out to the eastern flank. Transport, anti-aircraft cannon and missile launchers were also destroyed on this objective. Air attack had already accounted for 17 tanks, their rusty state indicating that they had been destroyed some days earlier.

'As we halted just beyond our objective's southern boundary, we began to receive prisoners, who appeared out of the ground waving white rags. In every direction one could see disconsolate lines of frightened, miserable, but relieved Iraqis trudging towards us with their hands in the air, carrying their weapons reversed over

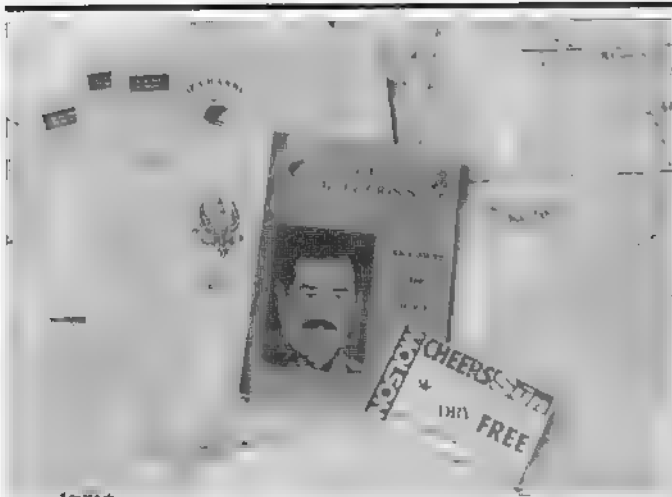
Captain P.W. Jaques of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers attached to 14th/20th battlegroup pictured against a 432 Armoured Personnel Carrier, 13A 'Julie'. Notice the well stowed appearance of the vehicle with bergens, jerrycans, sleeping soldier, etc.

their shoulders, many clutching leaflets the Allied Air Forces had dropped promising them good treatment if they surrendered.<sup>7</sup>

Remarkably, the battlegroup had no casualties up to this point and it was now that the 14th/20th suffered their one and only; Trooper Hayman fell off tank call sign 42 and broke his leg! From this point on enemy resistance slackened for, although a good deal of artillery and armour was destroyed on 'Steel' and 'Tungsten', the Iraqis now seemed to have adopted a new form of 'contact drill'; frantic waving of a white flag. It was on 'Steel' that the highly controversial friendly fire incident occurred and two British Warrior armoured personnel carriers were destroyed by American Warthog A10 aircraft. This was heard but not seen by members of 'D' Squadron, 14th/20th. In fairness to the Americans it should be observed that there were other incidents of this sort, one involving the lead elements of the 14th/20th battlegroup and Royal Artillery personnel but fortunately without fatal results.

A day later on G+4 the brigade had reached 'Cobalt' on the Basra road. In about 100 hours, 175 miles had been cov-





Paperwork from the campaign including the special 'bluey' or airmail letters stamped with 'Op Granby' and the regimental crest; a Sun 'free drink' voucher, and an Army Education Corps unclassified pamphlet 'The Gulf Crisis, background and issues'. This last is remarkably frank and discusses such issues as oil, fundamentalism, American foreign policy and the danger of 'Vietnamization'. The background is formed by a map showing the area of operations.

ered, several engagements fought and more than 1,500 prisoners taken. For his part in the campaign Colonel Vickery was to be awarded an OBE and a Bar to his regimental medal.

### ALLIED ADVANTAGE

It can be reasonably asked how the 'mother of battles' came to be over in 100 hours and the American fear of 'Vietnamization', at least for the foreseeable future, had been avoided. Through the eyes of the 14th/20th battlegroup several factors were immediately apparent.

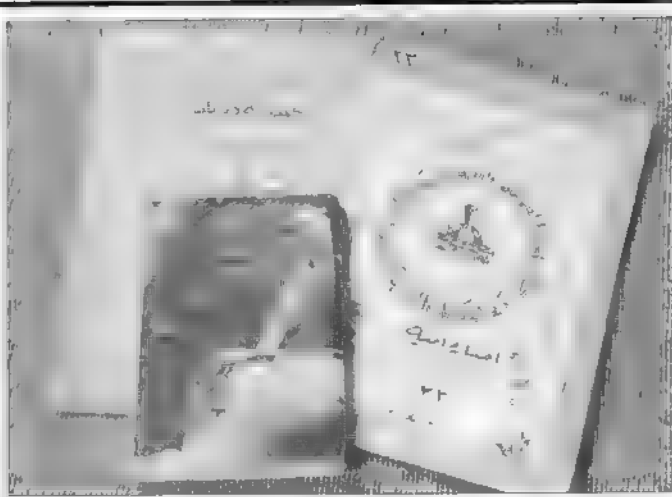
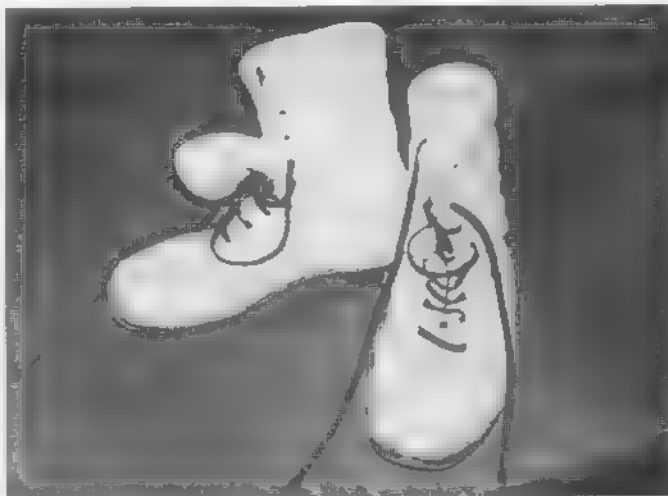
Most importantly, the Iraqi forces' morale had cracked; suddenly, unpredictably and catastrophically. Secondly there were tactical and technological advantages which had given the allied tank forces an 'edge' when it came to the crunch. Most of the attacks were carried out in darkness or shrouded by smoke; in such conditions the challenger's 'TOGS' or thermal imagery gun sights and the 'Sat Nav' or satellite navigation systems gave optimum help. Both were affected by adverse conditions but still left the allies with a considerable headstart and an ability to surprise the enemy.

How much the 'big left hook' came as a shock to the Iraqis is still open to debate. Some of the first gun positions encountered did face west and therefore

toward the actual direction of the assault, but as Robert Fox, war correspondent observed: 'Apart from those first positions, most of the companies of tanks had their guns resolutely facing south — at right angles to the allied attack. Some had their barrels resting on the embrasures of the sound fortifications — giving the impression of a beast stunned by a poleaxe.'<sup>5</sup>

Also telling was air superiority. Judging from reports by 14th/20th battlegroup, perhaps 20% of the armour they met had already had the attention of allied aircraft. As Fox noted, the Iraqi tanks hit by B-52 strikes had been 'torn apart' and scattered. 'In one crater, a turret and gun had been lifted 30 yards and dumped down in the sand like a decapitated elephant.' Artillery and Multi-Launch Rocket Systems similarly seemed to have overwhelmed their Iraqi opposite numbers, perhaps because the latter were already depleted by air strikes, perhaps because a telling local superiority had been achieved. One Iraqi artillery commander captured by 4th Brigade is quoted as saying that he started the war with 100 guns, after air attacks he

Colonel Vickery's desert boots as worn in the campaign



Iraqi documents captured from 52 Tank Brigade; The Iraqi 'Military Magazine', the 'top secret' training manual which has been copied out longhand and the personnel file of Taha Gamil Elayshi, 21-year-old soldier of tank 33, 71st Armoured Regiment

was down to 80, after artillery barrage he had only seven.

Towards the end of my visit to the 14th/20th in Germany I asked Lieutenant Ewart Baxter of 'A' Squadron what it had been like to be involved in the biggest tank battle of modern times. Baxter is a distant descendant of the Sergeant Ewart of the Scots Greys who had seized the eagle of the French 45th regiment at Waterloo, but if I expected a similar bloodthirsty account I was to be disappointed. 'It was more of a rout than a battle', he said modestly — and perhaps it was.

### OFFICERS' DRESS

The 'Officers Handbook'<sup>6</sup> which forms the basis of instructions on dress to new officers in the 14th/20th was singularly unhelpful when it came to practical campaign wear for the desert. As the preamble suggested, it was not 'an exhaustive production' but

intended to be combined with 'common sense and an enquiring mind'. In fact a very great deal of invention and improvisation was needed.

'What to wear in the desert?' should have rapidly been answered by the Ministry of Defence provision of lightweight desert combats. In the event nothing like enough were provided fast enough to meet the rapidly unfolding situation. According to rumour, old stocks had been sold off, and the production of new was hindered by a quibble over the pattern and robustness of the buttons. The result was that many officers and men continued to wear European type green DPM combats throughout training. The fact that desert nights were cold and that the campaign had commenced with heavy rain saw several wearing such untropical items as the fleecy 'Norwegian' shirt.

The Colonel himself did sometimes wear lightweight desert kit and amongst the uniforms given to the museum are two pairs of 'Trousers Combat Lightweight Desert DPM' and an issue bush hat. The makers noted include 'Compton Webb', 'Supercraft' and 'Bairdwear'. Few insignia seem to have been worn on these garments, the most obvious being a black on sand 'desert rats' gerboa on the right shoulder and a black and yellow on dark blue Prussian eagle or 'Hawk' on the headgear.

Colonel Vickery contrived to make the combats into a smart and semi-formal outfit by combining them with a beret, shoulder holster and sand coloured jersey. Slightly more relaxed get-ups were effected by wearing the combats with a sand coloured sleeveless woollen top with shoulder boards or even a sand coloured 'T-shirt'. Two were presented to the museum, a scarcely worn 'fruit of the loom' example and one bearing the eagle motif sur-



rounded by the words '14th/20th Kings Hussars — Gulf 1991'.

The Colonel described trousers, T-shirt and stable belt worn in combination as 'a sort of dress uniform'. Just as important as the clothes themselves

Webbing and equipment was also predominantly designed for the European theatre and so Bergens, 1958 and 1990 pattern webbing equipments all appeared in green. A desert camouflage helmet cover was issued

Hussars who are wished well in their new incarnation as The King's Royal Hussars

#### Notes

1. *An Account of the 14th/20th King's Hussars action at Al Hanifah on 26th February 1991 in Southern Iraq* by Lt-Colonel M.J.H. Vickery, Circulated February 1992

2. See also *The Hawk*, regimental journal of the 14th/20th King's Hussars, 1991, Gulf supplement pp87-183

3. Armour Piercing Fin Stabilised Discarding Sabot

4. Vickery's account *op cit*; HESH is 'High Explosive Squash Head'. The Colonel's own tank was known as 'The Emperor', an allusion to the King of Spain's chamberpot taken at Vitoria in 1813

5. Robert Fox 'Return to the Desert Battlefield' *Daily Telegraph*, 13 March 1991. Fox was attached to the battlegroup during 'Granby'

A member of Recce Troop against his Scorpion light tank. The effect of strong light through desert scrim camouflage ideally complements the sand and brown clothing and vehicle paintwork, breaking up the appearance of both, even with the viewer a few feet from the tank

6. *14th/20th King's Hussars Officers Handbook*, Regimental publication, 1987

7. The 14th/20th wear a small kukri badge on the shoulder in certain orders of dress to commemorate their role in transporting the 2/6th Gurkha rifles into action at Medicina in Italy in April 1945. The Prussian Eagle dates back to the 18th century when Princess Fredrika of Prussia was patroness of the 14th Light Dragoons

8. See MI/41 and /42



Close-up of the 'T' shirt badge and the 'hawk' worn on the campaign hat

were the accessories, and to the last Colonel Vickery was reluctant to part with his privately purchased size eight desert boots of rough suede. All ranks unanimously declared them infinitely more comfortable for the desert than 'boots combat high'

For eye protection Colonel Vickery favoured sun glasses and it would appear that for the fashion-conscious subaltern 'Ray Bans' were 'de rigueur'. Others chose ski masks which had the added advantage that they fitted close to the face and helped keep out dust. The arab neck scarf or 'Shemagh' was worn by many; either loose or tied into a cravat shape. Some of these accessories were actually sent out from the UK to the regiment by well wishers after the regiment's departure

to cover the green 'Helmet Combat GS Mk6' which was apparently worn by more of the Hussars than the crewman's helmet and headset.<sup>8</sup>

I should like to thank Colonel Vickery, Major D.A.J. Williams and Stuart Lloyd for their help in the preparation of this article, as well as all ranks of the 14th/20th King's

Lieutenant-Colonel Vickery (back to camera) in the desert with other officers of the 14th/20th. Vickery has teamed his Lightweight Desert Combats with a sand coloured jersey, shoulder holster and a beret whilst Captain A.C.G. Ross (right), the Ops officer, is clearly wearing the blue primrose, blue stable belt of the regiment. Watch keeper Captain A.A. Gossage (centre left) and Captain J.R.M. Palmer have a more mixed appearance with 'Norwegian' shirts and green webbing





# The 1992 Chicago Show

BILL HORAN

ONE OF THE outstanding events in the model soldier enthusiast's diary every year is the Chicago Show. Last autumn's was no exception and produced figures which collectors will fight to possess.

THE LATTER PART of September is a particularly frantic time of year for the North American miniaturist. Mundane matters such as putting food on the table, cutting the grass, world peace, putting on matching socks — even eating — all seem to take a back seat to the single most pressing matter facing the modeler: getting ready for the Chicago Show!

There never seem to be enough hours in the day, minutes in the hour, seconds in the minute to finish all the projects so confidently undertaken during the summer. Nonetheless, every year a new harvest of outstanding miniatures, vignettes and flats fill the tables at this most prestigious of model soldier exhibitions. The 1992 Chicago Show was no exception.

It is difficult to imagine a more enjoyable weekend for the model soldier enthusiast. In addition to the exhibition, there is a variety of very relaxing social activities put on by the Military Miniature Society of Illinois (MMSI) which hosts the show, including a banquet and cocktail party. Of course, no trip to the Chicago Show would be complete without a trip to stately Paine Manor, a museum-like abode certain to kindle the salivary glands in even the most jaded historical hack. Perhaps what amazes me most about the Chicago show is the seamless grace with which things seem to transpire. It is a show that almost seems to run itself, like a party for a large group of close friends. No doubt Tony Bialas, Dave

Peschke et al would chuckle to hear me saying this, as no doubt a tremendous amount of teamwork and planning goes into each show. They just make it look so darn easy!

The MMSI also graciously offered to play host to the World Model Soldier Federation's Grand Auction, organized to raise funds for World Expo '93 (see last month's issue). The success of the auction was in large measure due to the kind assistance and support given by the MMSI and its membership.

The exhibition once again featured a dazzling variety of first class miniature art. The open Division is for converted/scratchbuilt figures, vignettes and dioramas, and there were a host of good ones

## Video releases to buy

*The Charge of the Light Brigade* (Connoisseur Video PG)

*Over There* (DD Distribution)

*A History of the United States Air Force* (DD Distribution)

*Target Pearl Harbour* (DD Distribution: E)

*The Nuremberg Trials* (DD Distribution: E)

*Korea: The Untold Story* (DD Distribution: E)

*Nam: Tour of Duty* (DD Distribution: 15)

JOHN MOLLO'S article in *MI* 42 and '43 concerning his involvement with Tony Richardson's 1968 epic film *The Charge of the Light Brigade* resulted in numerous enquiries concerning its availability on video. Connoisseur Video have now commendably released the film in its original widescreen ratio. It is widely available in stores or direct from Connoisseur Video, 10a Stephen Mews, London W1P 0AX for £12.99 (+£1.50 postage).

The film begins at the London headquarters of the 11th Hussars. Their arrogant and egotistical commander, Lord Cardigan (Trevor Howard) takes great pride in the appearance of his 'cherrybums', but is given to arbitrary judgments and vindictive punishments. He inevitably clashes with the newly arrived Captain Lewis Nolan (David Hemmings). He arrests Nolan for drinking from a 'black bottle' in the officer's mess, having decreed that his officers must drink champagne. Nolan is introduced to, and soon falls in love with, Carissa Codrington (Vanessa Redgrave), soon to be married to his childhood friend Captain Morris (Mark Burns) of the 17th Lancers.

When Russia threatens Turkey, the vacillating Lord Raglan (John Gielgud) reluctantly embarks on a campaign in the Crimea. He paces Lord Lucan (Harry Andrews) in charge of the cavalry, with Lucan's enemy and brother-in-law Cardigan in charge of the Light Brigade. A

combined British and French fleet sails to the Crimea via Gibraltar. After a disastrous storm which causes the death of many horses, the army lands at Cambray Bay. The march to Sebastopol begins well but order is lost as cholera and dysentery take their toll. The infantry successfully rout a Russian army on the heights overlooking the River Alma, but the prevaricating Raglan fails to order a pursuit, thus necessitating a lengthy siege of Sebastopol. A Russian attack at Balaklava, designed to relieve pressure on the besieged city, brings about a chain of events culminating with the fateful charge.

The film paints a disturbing portrait of Victorian England, contrasting the gracious living enjoyed by the rich with the squalid tenements of the poor. Life in the army maintains the same inequalities. The indolent lifestyle of the officers contrasts with the conditions endured by the enlisted men subjected to horrifying floggings at the whim of their commander. The incompetence of the high command is evident. Senior army officers who have bought their commissions sneer at those with Indian service. Lord Raglan, working (literally) in the shadow of his predecessor Wellington, has to be constantly reminded the French are no longer the enemy! Cardigan and Raglan hurl childish insults at each other in the middle of battle.

The film's most enigmatic character is Nolan, presented as an amalgam of the real Nolan (Raglan's aide-de-camp) and Captain John Reynolds of the 11th Hussars. This enthusiastic officer anticipates a professionally run army which cares for its men, and defies Cardigan over the 'black bottle' affair. However, he considers war to be the most exciting thing in the

world', and cheerfully relieves enlisted men of their freshly cooked breakfast. Too late he realises he has pointed up the wrong valley, sending the Light Brigade to its doom.

The charge is shot deliberately anti-climactically. The spectacle of the six-hundred lined up ready to advance is soon lost amid smoke and explosions as the Russian artillery opens fire. They return from the valley, decimated, mutilated, shocked and bloody, in a scene reminiscent of Lady Butler's vivid painting *Balaclava*. Meanwhile, Cardigan, Lucan and Raglan squabble over who is responsible.

The script was by Charles Woods, a former regular in the 17th/21st Lancers who clearly drew from Cecil Woodham-Smith's definitive account of the campaign *The Reason Why*. Director Tony Richardson audaciously hired animator Richard Williams to create short animated sequences, inspired by Victorian illustrations, to advance the narrative. In his article Mollo justifiably points out the numerous inaccuracies foisted on the production by the director, but overall the film gives a most convincing view of a Victorian military campaign. The film is the very antithesis of Michael Curtiz's undeniably exciting but absurdly inaccurate 1936 version which starred Errol Flynn.

DD Distribution's *Over There* is a documentary about American Eighth Air Force personnel stationed in England during the war, written and directed by Roger A. Freeman, an acknowledged expert on the JSAAF in wartime Britain. It was released to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of their arrival. *The History of the United States Air Force 1931-53* is the USAF's official record from the pre-war humani-

itarian roles played by the US Army Air Corps to the activities of the USAAF in World War II and the Korean War. Of some interest, but 42 minutes is too short given the subject matter.

*Target Pearl Harbour* gives eyewitness accounts of the 'Day of Infamy' which brought America into the war. The attack is illustrated by genuine documentary footage and clips from *December 7th* (1943), a documentary directed by John Ford for the US Navy which utilised a combination of genuine footage, acted reconstructions and model-work. *The Nuremberg Trials* is a documentary (aka *Judgment of the Nations*) about the war-crimes trials of the top Nazis in 1946. It was filmed by a Russian film crew supervised by noted documentarist Roman Karmen in the Nuremberg Palace of Justice. It was shown theatrically in Russia and Russian occupied Germany. The sleeve curiously gives no indication of the age of the film or its historical significance. Also included is a brief American newsreel item concerning General Yamashita, the first Japanese to be tried for war-crimes. *Korea — The Untold Story* tells the story of the Korean War, mainly from the point of view of four American servicemen who endured quite harrowing experiences. It is presented by Loreita Swit, who plays 'Hot Lips' in the long-running *M\*A\*S\*H* television series.

*Tour of Duty*, the popular American television drama series set during the Vietnam War, lasted three seasons on US television. Several pairs of episodes from the first two seasons were released onto rental video in this country by New World Video. Now DD Distribution have re-released *Nam-Tour of Duty* (1987) onto self-through. The sleeve notes claim this is the 'extra length first episode', it is in fact the first two episodes, originally entitled *Tour of Duty* and *Notes From the Underground*.

Stephen J. Greenhill

## ON THE SCREEN



*Warrior's Taunt* by Brent Olson

present. Nationally known artist **Ron Tunison** entered a pair of superbly sculptured and painted busts of Brevet Brigadier General George A. Custer (Civil War era) and Confederate Major General J.E.B. Stuart, collecting a gold medal for the pair, and ultimately the Chicago Medal for continuing excellence. **Dennis Levy** and **Nick Infield** each collected their first gold medals at Chicago for superb box dioramas, with Dennis also collecting Best of Show honours for his 'Tauchen! Tauchen! Tauchen!'. One of the most popular pieces at the show was **Greg DiFranco's** breathtaking 'Scipio Africanus', a runner-up to Dennis Levy in a very tight Best of Show race. Greg's work just seems to get better and better — pretty scary for the rest of us!

Other gold medal winners included **Mike Good's** Eddie Rickenbacker bust, **Paul Keefe's** T.A.C.C. Trooper, **Bill Pritchard's** delightful 'Slimebellied Grinch' and entries by **Jim Holt**, **Don Kanaval**, **Bill Chilstrom** (another first time gold medal winner), and the MMSI's **Dave Peschke**.

Silver medals were awarded to **Jim Johnston** for his excellent

'Sack of Rome', a converted pair of 80mm Landsnechts, **Chris Walther** for his 90mm Scythian Warrior, 'Grenadier's Rest' by **Roland Laffert** and **John Redmond** for his fascinating 'Fly Machine'. **Gennero Segreto**, **Jim Kostakes**, **Chris Cayenberg**, **Kim Jones**, **Larry Peters**, **David Butterfield** and **Rod Curtis** were among the other miniaturists recognised for their achievements in the ever-challenging Open Division.

The stock figure class was particularly strong this year with gold medals going to such talented painters as **Mike Good** for his carefully painted Seaman, Royal Naval Brigade **Jerry Hutter's** 11th Uhlan, Canada's **Frank Fernandez** and Boston's **Ron Rudat** for their entire displays. **Paul Ashley** picked up his first ever gold for 'Hans meets his match', and **Steven Weakley**, **Joe Berton**, **Phil Kessling** and **Scott Eble** rounded out the ranks of the painter's gold medalists. Other notable award winners in the painters' class included **Jim Johnston** for his overall display, **Eric Erickson** for 'Piquero España', **Al Safwat** for 'Waterloo Hussar' and **Bill Chilstrom** for his 'Third Reich trio'.

Only two pieces received



*Lieutenant, US Marine Corps 1859* by Bill Horan

gold medals in the Ordnance Division, but they were real beauties. **Daniel Guerra's** superb Carrera Cup Racer and **Jack Taylor's** outstanding Morane-Saulnier I fighter took top honours in this class.

It was particularly pleasing to see **Dennis Levy** and **Ron Tunison** receive the top honours at this year's show. Ron has been recognised as one of America's top historical artists for many years now, and his sculptures have received international acclaim from artists and historians alike. His proudest achievement is the General Crawford monument which peers across the 'Valley of Death' in the shadow of Little Round Top at Gettysburg National Battlefield Park. He now becomes one of a select group of artists to receive this award for their achievement in miniature art. It's difficult to say whether it is Ron, or the other Chicago medallists he joins, who are most honoured by his membership.

**Dennis Levy's** box diorama was a tremendous achievement and well deserving of Best of Show honours. It reflected well on the judges that they could see the many things he had not only done well, but superbly. The meticulously modelled

submarine interior, the sense of panic and claustrophobia all combined to create a piece which attracted a crowd of fascinated spectators all day long. It takes no particular judging skill to find fault with any piece. The measure of the truly skilled judge is the ability to see quality, imagination and skill in execution. In short, to see that a modeller has done *right*. In this regard, the judges (each a fellow modeller) deserve credit for recognising the craftsmanship and skill that **Dennis** brought to this fine piece.

After the very entertaining banquet, hosted by the MMSI, at which **Bill Ottinger** gave an entertaining and often hilarious talk, it was off to the hospitality suite for a bit more rehashing of the show. For those who saw the film 'Dances With Wolves', the mood is much like the scene after the buffalo hunt in which **Kevin Costner's** character, stuffed with food and drink, tells of the day's exploits again and again, each time to the delight of the smiling men and women sitting about the campfire. Well there wasn't a campfire, but there were plenty of good stories to tell, as there will be once more at the conclusion of next year's Chicago Show! **M**





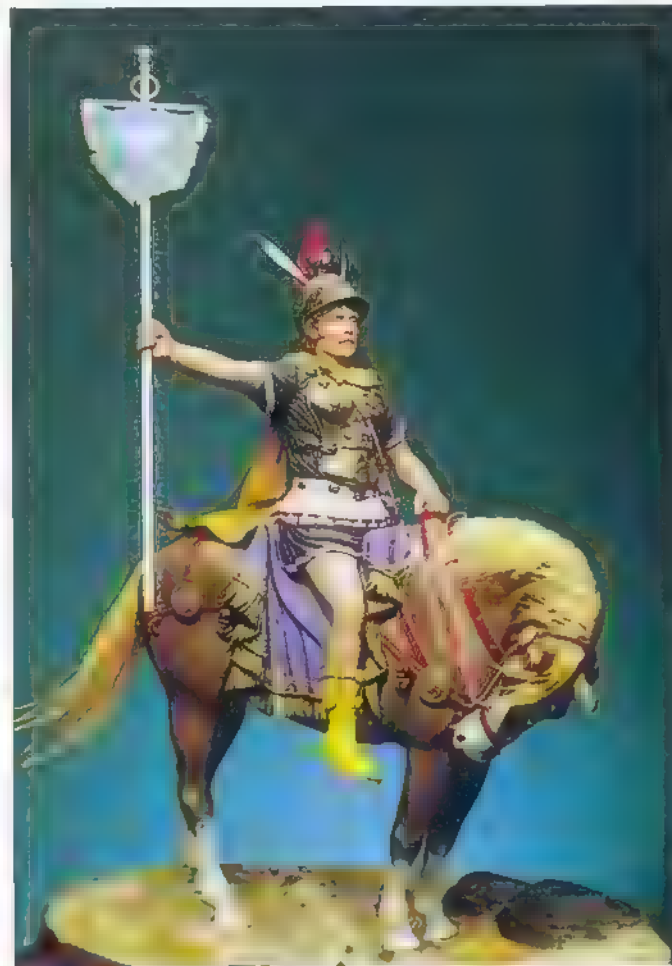
Above: Irish Galloglas by Phil Kessling



Above: SS infantryman by Dave Peschke



Below: Roman Infantryman by John Bernier



Below: Scipio Africanus by Greg DeFranco

# The London Regiment: 15th-19th Battalions

**15th (County of London) Battalion (Prince of Wales's Own Civil Service Rifles)**

**Titles:** 1860, 21st Middlesex (Civil Service) Rifle Volunteer Corps; 1880, 12th Middlesex (Civil Service) Rifle Volunteer Corps; 1898, The Prince of Wales's Own 12th Middlesex (Civil Service) Volunteer Rifle Corps; 1908, 15th (County of London) Battalion, The London Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own Civil Service Rifles).

During 1860 several Government departments in London raised independent companies of volunteers — 21st Middlesex by the Audit Office and Post Office, 27th Middlesex by the Inland Revenue, 31st Middlesex from various offices in Whitehall and, at the Admiralty, the 34th Middlesex. By June 1860 these companies had been merged under the title of 21st Middlesex Rifle (Civil Service) Volunteer Corps, its headquarters placed at Somerset House and its eight companies organised at: 'A' (Audit Office), 'B' and 'C' (Post Office), 'D' and 'E' (Inland Revenue), 'F' and 'G' (Whitehall), 'H' (Admiralty). A new company ('K') was raised by clerks and senior members of the Bank of England in 1866.

The Corps became a volunteer battalion of the King's Royal Rifle Corps in 1881 and in 1900-02 members served in both that regiment and the City Imperial Volunteers. In the Great War, 1/15th served in France and Flanders as part of 140th Brigade, 47th (2nd London) Division, seeing action at Aubers Ridge, Festubert and Loos in 1915 and Vimy Ridge before travelling south for the great Somme battles of 1916. Ypres and Cambrai followed in 1917. The 2/15th, with 179th Brigade, 60th Division, saw service in Ireland during May 1916 before moving to France in June. The Battalion left Marseilles for Salonika in November 1916 and subsequently served in Egypt and Palestine. Leaving the 60th

RAY WESTLAKE

**FORMED FROM** Civil Service departments, local firms and stores and Irish volunteers, these six battalions of the London Regiment suffered heavy casualties on the Western Front and won numerous battle honours there and in the Middle East.



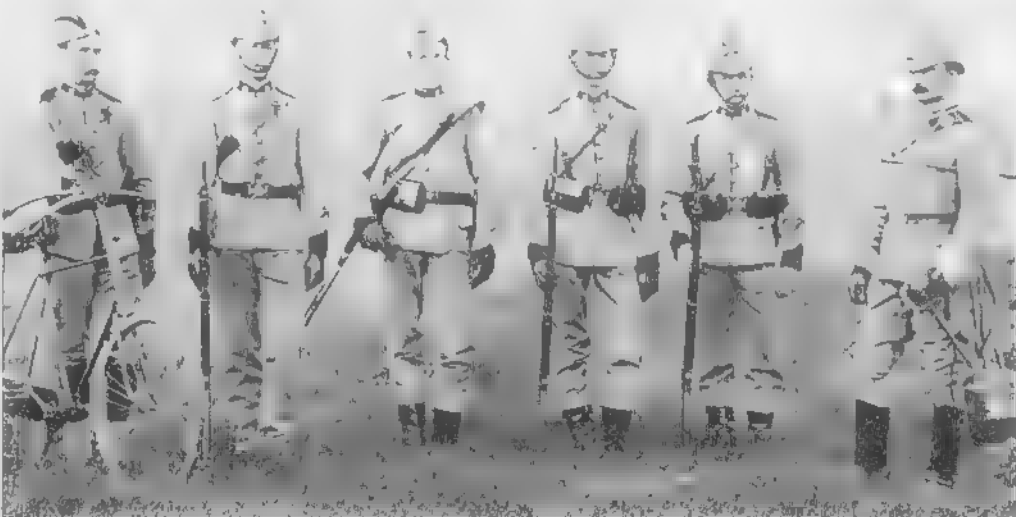
*William Coultts, Viscount Bury, Commanding Officer 21st Middlesex Rifle Volunteers 1861. Lithograph by H. Fleuss. Viscount Bury commanded the Regiment from 1860-1890. (Ray Westlake Unit Archives.)*

Division, 2/15th Battalion returned to France in June 1918 and joined 90th Brigade, 30th Division.

The Battalion in 1921 was amalgamated with the 16th London Regiment to form the 16th (County of London) Battalion, The London Regiment (Queen's Westminster and civil Service Rifles).

**Battle honours:** Festubert 1915, Loos, Somme 1916 and '18, Flers-Courcelette, Le Transloy, Messines 1917, Ypres 1917 and '18, Cambrai 1917, St Quentin, Ancre 1918, Albert 1918, Bapaume 1918, Amiens, Courtrai, France and Flanders 1915-18, Doiran 1917, Macedonia 1916-17, Gaza, El Mughar, Nebi Samwil, Jerusalem, Jericho, Jordan, Telf Asur, Palestine 1917-18

**Uniform and badges:** The first uniform of the Civil Service Volunteers was dark grey with blue facings, silver lace, black belts. Helmets replaced the shako in 1881. By 1888 the Regiment was suffering a considerable decline in its recruitment. It was thought that the sombre grey uniform could possibly be a reason why the young volunteer was not joining the 12th. Subsequently it was decided that a change to a much lighter shade was necessary and at the Annual Inspection of 1890 a new uniform of light grey with Royal blue facings was seen for the first time. The Prince of Wales had been Honorary Colonel of the Regiment since its formation, his Plumes and motto 'Ich Dien' (I serve) featuring in the badges of the Volunteers and as cap and collar badges for the Territorials



*12th Middlesex Rifle Volunteer Corps circa 1893. Prince of Wales's Plumes feature in the centre of the Maltese cross helmet plates (note blue backing) and as the collar badge. Note the officer's black patent leather sabretache. (Ray Westlake Unit Archives.)*





*Civil Service Rifles on exercise circa 1904. Note the special pattern grey helmets. (Ray Westlake Unit Archives.)*

**16th (County of London) Battalion (Queen's Westminster Rifles)**

**Titles:** 1860, 22nd Middlesex (Queen's) Rifle Volunteer Corps; 1880, 13th Middlesex (Queen's) Rifle Volunteer Corps (Westminster); 1908, 16th (County of London) Battalion, The London Regiment (Queen's Westminster Rifles); 1921, 16th (County of London) Battalion, The London Regiment (Queen's Westminster and Civil Service Rifles); 1922, 16th London Regiment (Queen's Westminster and Civil Service Rifles); 1938, The Queen's Westminsters, The King's Royal Rifle Corps

Recruited from the parishes and local firms of Pimlico and Westminster, this regiment soon comprised 18 companies. With headquarters at No 58 Buckingham Gate, companies in 1903 (by then 16) were distributed as follows: 'A'-'D' (Pimlico); 'E' and 'F' (St John's), the latter being recruited from Messrs Broadwood's; 'G' (Messrs Trollope & Sons and St Margaret's); 'H' (St James'); 'I' and 'K' (St Martin's), 'L' (Messrs Schoolbread); 'M' (St Clement Dane's), 'O' (Royal Welsh); 'R' (Greater Westminster); 'S' (Mounted Infantry); 'I' (Cyclists).

The Battalion landed at Havre on 3 November 1914 and joined 18th Brigade, 6th Division, then in the Ypres sector. There would be high casu-

alties at Hooze on 9 August 1915. On 9 February 1916, the Westminsters transferred to 169th Brigade, 56th (1st London) Division and with this formation fought on the Somme throughout 1916, the operations at Arras, Ypres and Cambrai in 1917 and the great battles of Scarpe, Canal du Nord and the Sambre in the last year of the war.

The second-line battalion,

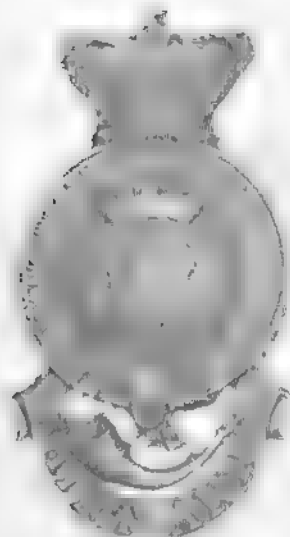
2/16th, joined 179th Brigade, 60th (2nd/2nd London) Division, and was sent to Ireland for security duty in April 1916. Having moved to France in the following June, 2/16th Battalion in November left Marseilles for Salonika. It later served in Egypt and Palestine before returning to France in June 1918. The Battalion then joined 90th Brigade, 30th Division

As a result of the post-war reorganisations of the Territorial Force (renamed Territorial Army), 16th London Regiment was amalgamated with the 15th (Civil Service Rifles). Both battalions had been associated with the King's Royal Rifle Corps since 1881.

**Battle honours:** Hooze 1915, Somme 1916 and '18, Albert 1916, Guillemont, Ginchy, Fiers Courcellette, Morval, Le



*Colonel Sir Charles Howard Vincent, Commanding Officer 13th Middlesex Rifle Volunteer Corps 1884-1904. (Ray Westlake Unit Archives.)*



Pouch-belt plate, St Ann's Parish Contingent, 22nd Middlesex Rifle Volunteer Corps. (Ray Westlake Unit Archives.)

Transloy, Arras 1917 and '18, Scarpe 1917 and '18, Ypres 1917 and '18, Langemarck 1917, Cambrai 1917, Hindenburg Line, Canal de Nord, Courtrai, Valenciennes, Sambre, France and Flanders 1914-18, Doiran 1917, Macedonia 1916-17, Gaza, El Mughar, Nebi Samwil, Jerusalem, Jericho, Jordan, Tell Asur, Palestine 1917-18.

**Uniform and badges:** The Westminster Rifles wore light grey with scarlet facings and piping, silver lace, brown belts. Shakos gave way to helmets after 1878 which in turn were replaced by grey rifle busbys in 1906. A portcullis — the principal charge of the Arms of Westminster — and a Ducal Coronet featured in badges and buttons. Under Regimental Order No 2 of March 1925, a new badge was approved for the amalgamated battalion. The Maltese Cross was retained, its centre displaying both the portcullis and the Prince of Wales's Plumes mounted on two ovals.

#### 17th (County of London) Battalion (Poplar and Stepney Rifles)

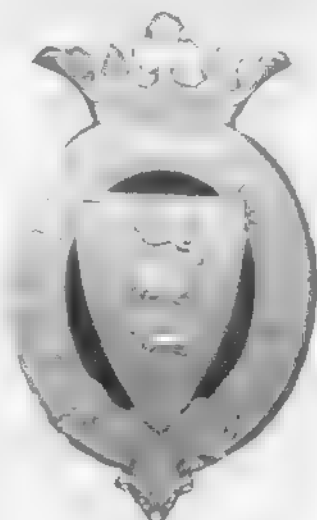
**Titles:** 1860, 26th Middlesex Rifle Volunteer Corps 1864, 26th Middlesex (The Customs and the Docks) Rifle Volunteer Corps; 1880, 15th Middlesex (The Customs and the Docks) Rifle Volunteer Corps

1861, 1st Administrative Battalion of Tower Hamlets Rifle Volunteers; 1880, 2nd Tower Hamlets Rifle Volunteer Corps.

1908, 17th (County of London) Battalion, The London Regiment (Poplar and Stepney Rifles); 1922, 17th London Regiment (Poplar and Stepney

Rifles), 1937, Tower Hamlets Rifles, The Rifle Brigade (Prince Consort's Own).

The 17th Battalion was formed by the amalgamation in 1908 of two volunteer battalions of the Rifle Brigade — 15th Middlesex and 2nd Tower Hamlets Rifle Volunteer Corps. The 15th had been formed by Customs Officers serving in London docks as 26th Corps in 1860. In 1864 it absorbed another dockland corps — the 9th Tower Hamlets (formed 1860), the 42nd Middlesex (formed 1860 at St Catherine's Docks) by 1866, and in 1868 the 8th Tower Hamlets which had been formed in 1860 at the West India Dock. The 26th was



Pouch belt plate, 26th Middlesex Rifle Volunteer Corps. (John Byrne Collection.)

numbered as 15th in 1880

In 1861 the following Tower Hamlets corps were organised with others from the area into the 1st Administrative Battalion of Tower Hamlets Rifle Volunteers — 3rd (formed in 1860 at Spitalfields), 7th (formed in 1860 at Mile End) and 10th (formed in 1860 at Goodman's Fields). Most of the 3rd Corps was recruited from Truman's Brewery Ltd. The three corps were merged in 1880 as 2nd Tower Hamlets.

Headquarters of the 17th London Regiment were at No 66 Tredegar Road, Bow, and on 16 March 1915, 1/17th landed at Havre. As part of 141st Brigade, 47th (2nd London) Division, the Battalion took part in the May battles of Aubers Ridge and Festubert and Loos in the following September. There would high casualties on the Somme in 1916 and at Messines and Pilckem Ridge in 1917. With 180th Brigade, 60th (2nd/2nd London) Division, 2/17th Battalion moved from France to Salonika in November 1916,

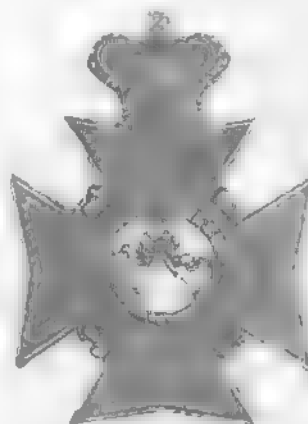
Egypt in June 1917. It then returned to the Western Front for service with 89th Brigade, 30th Division in June 1918

**Battle honours:** Aubers, Festubert 1915, Loos, Somme 1916 and '18, Flers-Courcellette, Morval, Le Transloy, Messines 1917, Ypres 1917 and '18, Langemarck 1917, Cambrai 1917, St Quentin, Bapaume 1918, Ancre 1918, Albert 1918, Courtrai, France and Flanders 1915-18, Doiran 1917, Macedonia 1916-17, Gaza, El Mughar, Nebi Samwil, Jerusalem, Jericho, Jordan, Tell Asur, Palestine 1917-18.

**Uniform and badges:** The Tower Hamlets Corps wore grey with scarlet facings, the 15th Middlesex green and scarlet. That for the 17th London Regiment was green with black facings. Headdress changed from shakos to helmets (Maltese cross plates) after 1878 and then to black rifle busbies. The cap badge of the 17th London Regiment was based on that of the Rifle Brigade

#### 18th (County of London) Battalion (London Irish Rifles)

**Titles:** 1860, 28th Middlesex (London Irish) Rifle Volunteer Corps; 1880, 16th Middlesex (London Irish) Rifle Volunteer Corps; 1908, 18th (County of London) Battalion, The London Regiment (London Irish Rifles);



Helmet plate, 26th Middlesex Rifle Volunteer Corps. (Ray Westlake Unit Archives.)

1922, 18th London Regiment (London Irish Rifles); 1937, London Irish Rifles, The Royal Ulster Rifles.

The first meeting with a view to raising a corps of Irish volunteers resident in the London area took place at the Freemason's Tavern, Great Queen Street, on 5 December 1859. Chairing the meeting was the Marquess of Donegall who became the Battalion's first Commanding Officer. Soon some 1,170 had enrolled, the ranks containing many Irish

Peers and Gentlemen. Just after the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War members of the Corps volunteered for service, an officer and some 40 men paying their fares to France to fight in the French Army. Members of the London Irish later served in a more official capacity in both the Royal Irish Rifles and City Imperial Volunteers. The Corps was made a volunteer battalion of the Rifle Brigade in 1881 and affiliated to the Royal Irish Rifles in 1916

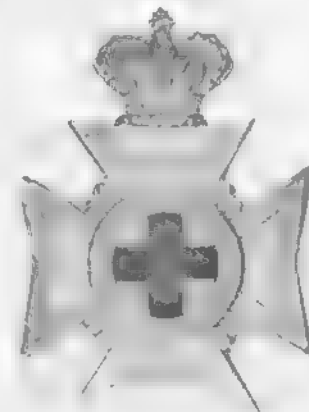
1/18th Battalion left its headquarters at the Duke of York's, Chelsea, for the St Albans area shortly after war was declared. It landed in France on 11 May 1915 and subsequently served on the Western Front as part of 141st Brigade, 47th Division. The second-line battalion served in France, Salonika, Egypt and Palestine with 180th Brigade, 60th Division, until disbandment in July 1918.

**Battle honours:** Festubert 1915, Loos, Somme 1916 and '18, Flers-Courcellette, Morval, Le Transloy, Messines 1917, Ypres 1917, Langemarck 1917, Cambrai 1917, St Quentin, Bapaume 1918, Ancre 1918, Albert 1918, Pursuit to Mons, France and Flanders 1915-18, Doiran 1917, Macedonia 1916-17, Gaza, El Mughar, Nebi Samwil, Jerusalem, Jericho, Jordan, Palestine 1917-18

**Uniform and badges:** At first, grey with shakos bearing Harp badges. In 1870 a change was made to dark green, the facings being light green. Helmets were introduced after 1878, and replaced by the rifle busby in the 1890s. Shamrock badges were worn on the collars

#### 19th (County of London) Battalion (St Pancras)

**Titles:** 1860, 29th Middlesex Rifle Volunteer Corps; 1864, 29th Middlesex (North



Helmet plate, 2nd Tower Hamlets Rifle Volunteer Corps Bearer Section. White metal with red felt backing to cross. (Ray Westlake Unit Archives.)





*Drums and Bugles, London Irish. (Ray Westlake Unit Archives.)*

Middlesex) Rifle Volunteer Corps; 1908, 17th Middlesex (North Middlesex) Rifle Volunteer Corps; 1908, 19th (County of London) Battalion, The London Regiment (St Pancras); 1922, 19th London Regiment (St Pancras); 1935, 33rd (St Pancras) Anti Aircraft

Battalion, Royal Engineers.

Formed as a result of a meeting held on 12 October 1859 at the Vestry Hall, St Pancras, 29th Middlesex soon numbered ten companies, recruits in the main coming from Messrs Shoobredes, Pickfords, Boosey and Hawkes and Collard & Collard. The Corps became a volunteer battalion of the Middlesex Regiment in

1881.

1/19th Battalion left its Headquarters at No 76 High Street, Camden Town, for the St Albans area and from there moved to France in May 1915. War service was on the Western Front with 141st Brigade, 47th Division. The 2/19th was with 180th Brigade, 60th Division, and from France left for Salonika in November 1916. The Battalion later served in Egypt and Palestine and played an important role during the capture of Jerusalem in December 1917, two sergeants (Sedgwick and Hurcomb), receiving the keys of the City upon its surrender.

**Battle honours:** Festubert 1915, Loos, Somme 1916 and '18, Flers-Courcelette, Morval, Le Transloy, Messines 1917, Ypres 1917, Langemarck 1917, Cambrai 1917, St Quentin, Bapaume 1918, Ancre 1918, Albert 1918, Pursuit to Mons, France and Flanders 1915-18. Doiran 1917, Macedonia 1916-17, Gaza, El Mughar, Nebi Samwil, Jerusalem, Jericho, Jordan, Megiddo, Sharon, Palestine 1917-18.

**Uniform and badges:** Steel grey uniforms were first worn, their light green facings changing to dark green in 1875. In 1880 a change was made to green with black facings and to all green in 1904. Scarlet with green facings came in after 1908. Shako were replaced by fur rifle busbies and subsequently helmets. Badges were based on that of the Rifle Brigade, the post-1908 brass cap badge featuring in the centre the numerals XIX. **M**

*Major and Adjutant S M. Gullew. 17th Middlesex Rifle Volunteer Corps. (Ray Westlake Unit Archives.)*

**SON OF THE** stationmaster at Hampont in Alsace, Theodore Eicke was born on 17 October 1892. He was a poor student at school and at the age of 17 enlisted in the Bavarian 23rd Infantry Regiment, subsequently serving as a clerk and assistant paymaster during the First World War with the 3rd and 22nd Infantry Regiments and earning the Iron Cross Second Class.

After the war Eicke found it difficult to gain employment and moved from town to town acting as a paid police informer, but his outspoken opposition to the Weimar Republic constantly got him into trouble and he did not obtain permanent employment until 1923 when he joined I G Farben in Ludwigshafen, becoming a security officer. It is surprising, considering his political leanings, that it was not until five years later that he joined both the NSDAP and the SA; two years after that he transferred to the SS, which was then still only a tiny organisation devoted to protecting Hitler and the other Nazi leaders at public events. But it was in the SS that Eicke found his niche in life, and within three months his energy and political fanaticism led Himmler to promote him to Sturmbannführer (major) and entrust him with forming a second battalion for the 10th SS Standarte (regiment). A year later he was Standartenführer (colonel) of the regiment.

His political activities did not go down well with I.G. Farben and he was sacked once again, then jailed in 1932 for illegal possession of explosives. This made him an embarrassment to Himmler, who sent him into effective exile in Italy on his release from prison, but Hitler's accession to leadership in 1933 brought him back to Germany. After a power struggle with the man who had taken over the 10th Standarte in his absence, Eicke found a new niche. Himmler made him commandant of Dachau, the first properly organised concentration camp for political prisoners. Eicke was in his element. He not only instituted the most brutal treatment for the inmates, he made life hell for his guards as well. How this situation changed and eventually altered his mens' attitude towards him can be paraphrased in the phrase 'night of the long knives'.

Eicke was entrusted with the execution of Ernst Rohm if the



# Theodore Eicke

ROY BRYANT Paintings by BRIAN MOLLOY

DESCRIBED ONCE as 'a butcher and no soldier', Theodore Eicke nevertheless inspired fanatical loyalty amongst his troops and created in the SS 'Totenkopf' Division a formation which no less a person than Feldmarschall Erich von Manstein rated as the best fighting formation under his command.



SS-Gruppenführer Theodore Eicke

deposed SA chief of staff refused the 'honourable' alternative of suicide, and on 1 July 1934 he carried out his orders. As his reward, the semi-literate 'butcher' was promoted to Gruppenführer (general) and given the job of inspector of concentration camps, a position he occupied for five years. But, like most of the Nazi hierarchy, Eicke was still ambitious for more. He also fancied himself as a 'teutonic' warrior and came to see in the armed guards of his Totenkopfverbände ('death's head band') the nucleus of a new military formation to rival the Leibstandarte 'Adolf Hitler' and the SS-Verfügungstruppe ('special disposal troop').

Although there were no problems finding volunteers satisfying stringent racial and moderately stringent physical requirements, Eicke ran into severe problems with the Army, who refused for a long while to acknowledge service in the Totenkopfverbände as the equivalent of military service

and persisted in denying him access to the arms he needed to create a proper military formation. But Eicke was nothing if not persistent and by wheedling, cajoling and, if necessary, stealing, succeeded by May 1940 in creating an almost completely motorised infantry division — one of only seven such out of 139 infantry divisions in the German armed forces.

His men had already seen some action in Poland by then, operating behind the lines in unsavoury 'security' operations, and to Eicke's fury were again assigned a reserve position for the campaign in the West. This was amended shortly afterwards, and the 'Totenkopf' Division was thrown into the affray. Casualties were high, largely the result of inexperienced and inept leadership, resulting in Eicke being called 'a butcher and no soldier' by his Korps commander, and a company of the division under Obersturmführer (2nd lieutenant) Fritz Knochlein was responsible for the massacre of British prisoners from the Royal Norfolk Regiment at Le Paradis.

Eicke's military reputation at

the end of the French campaign was fragile, but his resolve and resourcefulness were to be demonstrated amply within months of the opening of the Russian campaign a year later, and it is from this period that his own reputation and that of the 'Totenkopf' Division stems. He might not have been somebody you would want to invite home, but he was a hard b... and produced results. He had already relaxed many of the harsh rules of his original concentration camp days for his combat troops, ordering his officers to mix with the men when off duty to encourage shared discipline, and even instituting a 'suggestions box' through which his men could express ideas or complaints anonymously. This tied his men to him more closely than in any other Waffen-SS formation (with the exception of the Leibstandarte, who would have done anything for 'Sepp' Dietrich); and certainly put him more closely in touch than any Prussian Army commander achieved.

Eicke's 'Totenkopf' Division achieved miracles when the Red Army's winter counter offensive broke upon Army Group North during a blizzard on the night of 7/8 January 1942. The Group had already been denuded of tanks for operations further south and had settled into a static siege of Leningrad. Eicke's division was dug in — as far as the frozen ground permitted — in the Valdai Hills when the attack began. The next weeks were a nightmare. Eicke produced miracles from nothing, rushing troops from threatened point to threatened point, particularly at Staraya Russa and Demyansk. By the end of a month the division was completely cut off and, despite the most strenuous efforts of the Luftwaffe, hideously short of supplies. Eicke had to force his walking wounded into the line and mere companies, sometimes reduced to a strength of 40 or 50 men, were entrusted with defending points against attacks by whole divisions. The only villages the Russians recaptured were those in which every single 'Totenkopf' soldier had been killed.

The Demyansk 'siege' dragged on until April when, after 72 days of the most bitter fighting imaginable, the emaciated survivors finally managed to link up with relieving forces. Morale was understandably low, because it is only with an historian's hindsight that one can see what the men had actually achieved, so they were entrained for France in order

Brian Molloy's reconstruction on the back cover show, left: SS-Brigadeführer (Lieutenant-General) Theodore Eicke, Röhms Purg, 1934. Eicke is wearing the all-black uniform of the Allgemeine-SS, the oakleaf insignia and shoulder boards of his rank and the Nazi armband on his left sleeve. His Party badge is visible on his tie. Right: SS-Obergruppenführer (General) Theodore Eicke, Russian front, 1943. Pictured shortly before his death, the pipe-smoking Eicke here wears a battered 'old style' officer's cap and a black leather greatcoat over his field grey uniform with Knights Cross and Oakleaves at his throat (Awarded 26 December 1941 and 20 April 1942 respectively.)

that the unit could be rebuilt, and re-equipped as a Panzergrenadier division.

Eicke's force returned to Russia at the beginning of 1943 as part of the new I SS Panzer Korps, and was to see its second greatest battle at Kursk in July. But Theodore Eicke would not be in command. During Manstein's counter offensive around Poltava in February, Eicke lost radio contact with his leading tanks. On the afternoon of the 26th he, his adjutant and pilot set off in his Fieseler Storch to try to find them. Returning over the Russian lines, the little aircraft was shot down in flames, all three occupants perishing. An immediate attempt by 'Totenkopf' personnel to reach the wreck was beaten off by heavy machine-gun fire. Later, a group of volunteers sheltering behind three tanks and two assault guns fought their way through and recovered the bodies.

Theodore Eicke was given a hero's funeral although within the Nazi hierarchy most of the tears belonged to crocodiles because his ignorance, intransigence and simple brutality had endeared him to few. There was, however, genuine grief within the 'Totenkopf' Division, for after his rough beginnings, Eicke had discovered inside himself a genuine talent as a field commander. He was not a 'back seat' general but a man who led from the front, and soldiers appreciate a commander who can be seen 'up at the sharp end'. Even during the battle of the Demyansk pocket, he shared his men's rations and living conditions. He will never be rated as one of the 'great' captains, but perhaps he deserves better than the description 'butcher'? **MD**



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Brigadeführer, 1934



Gruppenführer, 1943

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